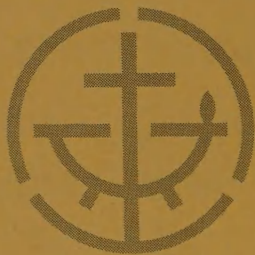


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PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT ;

OR,

A THIRD SERIES

OF

THE EARLIEST RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

THE INFANT MIND

IS CAPABLE OF RECEIVING ;

WITH

VERSES ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE SUBJECTS.

Mortimer, Mrs. Favell Lee (Bevan)


1802-1878

BY THE AUTHOR

OF "THE PEEP OF DAY," AND "LINE UPON LINE."

Precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept.—ISA. 28:10.

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PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT.

LESSON I.

SAMUEL, OR THE PIOUS MOTHER.

1 SAMUEL, 1; 2:1-11.

You have heard, my dear children, how the Israelites came into the land of Canaan. I shall now tell you what happened to them in Canaan, after Joshua was dead. Do you know who was their King? God was their King. Joshua was not their king, though he used to tell them what God wished them to do. After Joshua was dead, there were other men who told them what God wished them to do; but God was their King.

Do you remember that the tabernacle was placed in Shiloh? The high-priest lived in Shiloh, that he might offer sacrifices in the tabernacle.

I am now going to tell you of a high-priest called Eli.

Eli was a very good old man. A great many people used to come up every year to Shiloh, to worship God at the tabernacle.

Among the people who came up to worship at the tabernacle, there was a man who had two wives. You know that people might have two wives a long while ago, though they must not have two now.

One of these wives was a very good woman, and she was called Hannah; but she had no little child. The other wife was unkind and wicked; but she had a great many children. The unkind wife laughed at Hannah, and said, that God gave Hannah no child because he did not love her. This was not true, for God loved Hannah very much. Poor Hannah used sometimes to cry when the other wife spoke so unkindly to her.

Once when Hannah had come to Shiloh, and the other wife had been laughing at her, poor Hannah went to the tabernacle to pray to God. Eli was in the court of the tabernacle. He was sitting upon a high seat, and he saw Hannah come into the court. Now poor Hannah was praying to God in a very low voice, and her eyes were red with weep

ing. When Eli saw Hannah, he thought she had been drinking wine, and he spoke roughly to her, and said, Why do you not leave off drinking wine? How much ashamed poor Hannah must have been, when Eli said this to her before all the people. But she answered very meekly, and said, I have not been drinking wine; I have been praying to God, for I am very unhappy.

When Eli heard this, he spoke kindly to her, and said, May God give you what you have been asking for.

What had poor Hannah been praying for? She had been praying for a little child, and she had been promising God to bring him up to serve God, and to teach people about God.

Hannah was very glad when Eli spoke so kindly to her, and she wiped away her tears, and she went home looking quite happy. You see, dear children, that it is a good thing to pray to the Lord when we are unhappy. I hope you do so when you are sick, or when you are in disgrace, or when people are unkind to you.

Hannah went away from Shiloh to the place

where she lived in Canaan, and God gave her a little babe, and she called his name Samuel.

While Samuel was a babe, Hannah did not go up to Shiloh ; but when he was a little child about three or four years old, she took him up to Shiloh with her.

Hannah did not forget her promise to bring up her child to teach people about God ; and she did not mean to keep him always at home with her, though she loved him very much ; for she wished the good old high-priest Eli to bring him up, and to teach him. So she brought the child to Eli, and said to him, I am the woman that you once saw in the court of the tabernacle, praying to God ; I was praying for this child, and God has heard my prayer, and I wish the child to be brought up to serve God.

Eli took the little boy to live with him. Hannah sung a beautiful song of praise to God for his goodness in hearing her prayers, and then she left her dear little Samuel, and she went home again with her husband.

Do you think she ever came to see her child ? Yes, every year, and she always brought him ■ present of a dress such as the people wore in

those days. It was a linen dress down to his feet, and it had long sleeves. Samuel used to wear a linen ephod also, such as the priests wore, though Samuel was not a priest himself. God had put his Spirit into Samuel's heart, so that he liked serving the Lord in the tabernacle, and seeing the sacrifices offered, and hearing the Lord praised by the priests and the people. As he grew older, he pleased God more and more, and a great many people loved him. How glad Hannah must have been when she came to see him, to hear that he was a good child. It makes your parents, dear children, very happy to hear that you are good. And the angels are pleased when you are good, and Jesus your Saviour is pleased. I hope you will be like little Samuel, and be God's children while you are very young.

What lovely child with flowing hair
Old Eli's steps attends?
And why does he an ephod wear,
As by the priest he bends?

It is the child to Hannah sent,
When humbly she implored—
It is the child by Hannah lent
To her prayer-hearing Lord.

Nor foolish mirth, nor idle sports,
Young Samuel's heart engage ;
With joy he treads God's holy courts,
E'en from his tenderest age.

This child, with heavenly grace endued,
Was lovely in man's sight ;
And by his gracious Saviour viewed
With infinite delight.

LESSON II.

SAMUEL, OR THE LITTLE PROPHET.

1 SAMUEL, 2: 18, TO END.

You have heard, dear children, how Samuel lived with old Eli at Shiloh.

They did not live in the tabernacle, but in some tents very near it.

You would like to know whether Eli had any children of his own. He had two sons, who were grown up men, and they were priests, and offered sacrifices at the altar.

I suppose you think that Eli's sons were good, because Eli was good; but I am sorry to tell you, that they were very wicked men. They did not love God, they only cared for eating, and amusing themselves; and they did not wish to please God. Eli was good himself, but he did not punish his wicked sons, and that was very wrong in Eli. God has told fathers to beat their children with the rod, to save them from going to hell. My dear children, do your parents punish you when you fall in passions, or are disobedient, or tell lies? They punish you to make you good.

Eli heard of the wicked things that his sons did; and he said to them, Why do you do such wicked things? Every body tells me of your wickedness. O my sons, the Lord will be very angry with you, and will punish you. But Eli's sons would not mind what their father said, but went on in their bad ways.

At last a good man came to Eli, and told him that God was very angry, and that he would let both his sons be killed in one day.

It must have grieved Eli to hear this. God was displeased with Eli for not having punished his sons. Yet Eli was a good man, and God loved him.

The two sons went on in their wickedness. And now you shall hear something else that God said.

One evening old Eli was lying in bed; and little Samuel was lying in another bed a little way off. Samuel heard a voice calling him, Samuel! Samuel thought that Eli called him, and he answered, Here am I; and then he got out of bed, and ran to Eli, to know what he wanted. You see what a kind little child Samuel was, and how ready he was to wait upon old Eli.

But Eli said to Samuel, I did not call you. Then Samuel went and lay down again.

Soon afterwards Samuel heard some one call again, Samuel! So he went again to Eli, and said, Here am I, for you did call me. But Eli said, I did not call, my son; lie down again.

Then Samuel lay down, and he soon heard the voice again saying, Samuel! Then he felt sure that it was Eli who called him, and he went to him, and said, Here am I, for you did call me.

Now Eli knew who it was who had called Samuel.

My dear child, do you know who it was? It was the Lord.

So Eli told Samuel to lie down again, and when he heard the voice, to answer, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Samuel was to call himself God's servant.

So Samuel went and lay down again, and soon the Lord came and stood by him, and called as before, Samuel, Samuel! Then Samuel answered, Speak, for thy servant heareth. God had never spoken to Samuel before. Samuel must have longed to know what the Lord

had to say to him. It was something very sad and dreadful; it was about Eli.

God told Samuel that he should soon punish Eli's sons for their wickedness, and that he was displeased with Eli for not having punished them.

After God had done speaking, Samuel remained in his bed, and Eli did not call him. Samuel did not like to tell Eli that God was displeased with him.

So when the morning came, Samuel did not go to Eli, but began to open the doors round about the tabernacle; for it was Samuel's business to open the doors. Soon Eli called Samuel; for he wanted to know what God had said to Samuel. Eli begged Samuel to tell every thing to him, and to hide nothing from him. Then little Samuel told Eli all that God had said.

How grieved Eli must have been when he heard that the Lord would punish his sons, and that the Lord was displeased with him; but Eli answered very meekly, and said, Let the Lord do what he pleases. Eli really loved God, though he had done one wrong thing.

After this, God often spoke to Samuel, and

told him how he would punish wicked people; and Samuel used to tell people what God had said, and all that Samuel told them came true. Samuel was a prophet: a prophet is a person to whom the Lord tells what he means to make happen.

People paid great attention to what Samuel said, but still many people went on doing wicked things. The people in Shiloh were very wicked, and God determined soon to punish them, as well as Eli's sons. But God loved Samuel. What a happy child Samuel was.

My dear children, do not you wish that God loved you? If you love him, I am sure that he loves you; for he has said, "I love them that love me." Pray to God to make you love him a great deal more, and to make you good like Samuel. I hope that you will never be like Eli's wicked sons.

What voice salutes young Samuel's ear,
So like to Eli's gentle tone?
O let the child no danger fear,
It is the Lord from heaven come down.

And why does he to Samuel speak?
On him the Lord has poured his grace,
And made him holy, wise, and meek,
And fit to fill a prophet's place.

With grief he hears of dreadful woes
The sons of Eli soon shall feel ;
But dreads the message to disclose,
Till Eli bids him all reveal.

Such was the tender, gentle child
To whom these honors high were given ;
On him the great Jehovah smiled,
And deigned to speak with him from heaven.

CHILD.

O Lord, renew my infant heart,
Which is by nature hard and vain,
That I may act a lowly part,
And grieve to cause another pain.

LESSON III.

SAMUEL, OR THE ARK IN THE BATTLE.

1 SAMUEL, 4: 1-18.

I SHALL tell you to-day how God punished Eli's sons; but first I must speak to you of some people who lived in the land of Canaan, called the Philistines.

The Philistines lived in some of the towns of Canaan; they were wicked people, who worshipped idols, and they hated the Israelites: they often fought against the Israelites, and took away their things. When God was pleased with the Israelites, he did not let the Philistines hurt them, but now he was angry with the Israelites.

One day a great number of Philistines came out of their towns to fight against the Israelites. They brought some tents with them, and slept in them at night. The Israelites heard that the Philistines were coming to fight against them; so a great number of Israelites took their swords and spears, and placed their tents near the tents of the Philistines. In the morning the Philistines and the Israelites

fought with each other. Who do you think conquered? The Philistines. Yes; God did not help the Israelites as he used to do, so the Israelites were frightened, and ran back into their tents.

Now the Israelites ought to have prayed to God to forgive their sins; but instead of praying, they said, Let us send for the ark of God. If the ark were here, we should be able to conquer the Philistines.

You remember that the ark was a golden box, on which God sometimes sat in a cloud. But would the ark save them? No; only God can save people.

The Israelites sent a person to Shiloh to ask the priests to bring the ark to the tents. The sons of Eli, you know, were priests. They brought the ark to the tents of the Israelites. When the Israelites saw the ark, they were delighted, and they gave a very loud shout to show their joy. The shout could be heard a great way off. The Philistines heard the shout; and they asked why the Israelites shouted. Soon they heard that the ark of the God of Israel was come to the tents of the Israelites. Then the Philistines were afraid, and they said,

If the God of the Israelites should help them, what should we do? for their God once killed Pharaoh and all his men, and he could kill us too. O let us be very brave, and let us fight with all our strength.

So the Philistines and the Israelites came out of their tents to fight, and the priests brought the ark on their shoulders.

But God did not help the Israelites. They were soon afraid, and ran back to their tents, and a great many of them were killed; and the two sons of Eli were killed, as God had said. What became of the ark of God?

The Philistines took it. How pleased they were to get the ark. They carried it back to the towns where they lived.

Eli had not come to the battle. He had stayed in Shiloh: he was very unhappy about the ark. He wanted to know what had become of it; so he sat upon a high seat just at the gate of Shiloh.

At last a man came running along the road: he had been fighting in the battle, and he came to tell the people in Shiloh all that had happened. He had put dust upon his head, and he had torn his clothes, to show that he

had sad news to tell; for people used to put dust on their heads, and to tear their clothes, when they were unhappy. But Eli was very old, and he was blind and did not see the man; and he did not know that the man had sad news to tell. When the man told the people in Shiloh what had happened, the people cried out very loud with grief; and Eli heard them crying, and asked why they cried: then the man answered, I am just come from the place where the Israelites were fighting. Then Eli said, What has happened there? Then the man said, The Israelites have run away from the Philistines, and a great many Israelites have been killed, and your two sons are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

When Eli heard that the ark was taken, he was very unhappy indeed: he was sitting on a high seat that had no back, and he fell backwards in his grief, and broke his neck; for he was a very old man, and very heavy. He was almost a hundred years old.

What a very sad way of dying this was, instead of dying in his bed.

How grieved Samuel must have been, when he heard how Eli had died! Where did Eli's

soul go? To heaven. Eli loved God very much.

Why was Eli so sorry that the ark was taken? Because the ark was the throne where God used to sit, and he did not wish wicked people to have it; so you see that Eli loved God very much.

Where had the souls of Eli's sons gone? I know they had gone into darkness; for God had said that he would not forgive them.

But God forgave Eli all his sins, though he punished him before he died.

You will like to hear what the Philistines did with the ark of God. I will tell you about it in the next lesson.

THE ARK IN THE BATTLE.

Was it because his sons had perished,
That Eli's heart with grief was torn?
Rather because the ark so cherished
By heathen hands away was borne;
That holy ark, where oft between
The cherubim the Lord was seen.

And had the Lord at length departed
From Israel whom he loved so well?
Alas, old Eli, broken-hearted,
From his high seat astonished fell.
O who can doubt he loved the Lord,
And that to heaven his spirit soared?

But though his sins were all forgiven,
And washed away in Jesus' blood,
His way had been less rough to heaven,
Had Eli honored more his God.
But sinners, where shall they appear?
For righteous men are punished here

LESSON IV.

SAMUEL, OR THE GOD DAGON.

1 SAMUEL, 5; 6; 7:4.

Do you not wish to know what the Philistines did with the ark?

They were much delighted at getting the ark of the God of Israel; for they knew that he was a very great God. The Philistines took the ark to one of their cities, or towns; and they put it in the house of their idol. Their idol's name was Dagon. The Philistines had made an image like a man, and they called it Dagon; and they had built a house for Dagon, and they had set Dagon up on a high place; so they used to come and worship Dagon very often in this house.

The Philistines left the ark all night in the house of Dagon: the next morning, they got up early, and went into the idol's house. But what do you think they saw when they went in?

They saw their idol Dagon fallen down from the high place, and lying upon his face before the ark.

Who had thrown Dagon down? It was God,

who wished to show the Philistines that he was stronger than idols, and that he hated idols.

The Philistines were not quite sure that it was God who had thrown Dagon on the ground; so they lifted up Dagon, and set him in his place again near the ark; and they left him.

The next morning they rose up early, and came into the idol's house. What do you think they saw this time?

Dagon had fallen down again upon his face, before the ark; and this time Dagon was broken: his head and his hands were broken off from his body. The Philistines were very sorry their idol was broken. I do not know whether they mended their idol, or whether they set him up again; but God soon made something much worse happen to the Philistines. God made them very ill indeed, and full of pain. They said to one another, What shall we do with the ark? for it shall not stay in this city any longer. So they sent it to another city, where some other Philistines lived. What do you think happened to the people of that city when the ark of God was come into it?

They fell very ill indeed, and a great many

of them died. So the people of the city sent it to another city of the Philistines. The people of the other city were very much frightened when they saw the ark coming: they said, We shall die, now the ark is brought here.

Soon they fell very ill, and a great many of the people died, and the city was full of people groaning and crying.

At last the Philistines thought they would send the ark back to the Israelites; but they did not feel quite sure that the God of Israel had been angry with them for keeping the ark.

Had the God of Israel been angry with them? Yes, my dear child; you know that it was God who had made them so ill, and who had killed so many of them.

The Philistines made a plan for sending back the ark. This was their plan. They said, We will put the ark in a cart, and we will take two cows that have never drawn a cart before; and we will tie them to the cart, and we will shut up their calves in this place where we live. No one shall drive the cows, but we will see what they will do. If the God of Israel is so great, he can make the cows take the ark back to the Israelites. If

the cows leave their calves, and go to the place where the Israelites live, then we shall be quite sure that it was the God of Israel who made us so ill, to punish us for keeping the ark.

This was the plan of the Philistines. They had heard how God once sent plagues on Pharaoh, and they were afraid lest God should do the same to them. They said, We will not harden our hearts, as Pharaoh and the people of Egypt did.

The Philistines took two cows that gave milk, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home, and they laid the ark of God upon the cart, and they watched to see what the cows would do.

Then God made the cows do a wonderful thing. They drew the cart, without being driven, along the road which led to the place where the Israelites lived. They lowed as they went, and never once turned out of the road.

Some of the Philistines followed the cart.

At last the cart came to a place where some of the Israelites were reaping corn in a field. These Israelites looked up, and saw the cart coming, and soon they saw the ark, and then they were very glad indeed. The cows brought

the cart into the field, and then stopped by the side of a great stone.

The Israelites saw that it was God who had sent the ark back to them again; so they wished to offer a sacrifice unto God to thank him. They took the ark out of the cart and placed it on the great stone, and they took the cart; and cut it up for wood for a sacrifice and they killed the two cows, and burned them as a sacrifice, because it was God who had made the cows bring the ark back.

The Philistines were much surprised at the wonderful thing that God had done, and they went back to their own land. Ought they not to have left off worshipping idols, when they saw how great the God of Israel was?

Yes, they should have burned their idols when they got home, and only worshipped the true God. But they did go on worshipping idols, and God was angry with them for it.

And the Israelites did a thing that displeased God very much. They looked into the ark. God did not allow any body to look into the ark. You know what there was inside the ark. The book of stone in which the ten commandments were written.

God is very angry when people dare to disobey him; so he made those Israelites fall very ill, and a great many of them died. Then they were afraid of keeping the ark in their city, and they sent messages to some other Israelites to come and take it; and they came and took it, and put it in the house of a man. This man lived upon a hill, and he and his son took care of the ark in one of the rooms of his house.

Do you know why the ark was not sent back to the tabernacle at Shiloh? God was angry with the people at Shiloh for all their wickedness. The people in Shiloh had worshipped idols, and so God would not let the ark go back to Shiloh.

It was very kind in God to let the ark come again into the place where the Israelites lived, and all the people in Israel who loved God were very glad that the ark had come back.

Philistines dared with heathen pride
To set the ark by Dagon's side,
Within their idol's temple walls;
The door they close—
Lo, Dagon bows,
And on his face he falls.

In vain they set him up again ;
He cannot near the ark remain :
Ah, see, he trembles where he stands
 Falls from his place
 With dire disgrace,
And breaks his head and hands.

CHILD.

And are some children taught to pray
To such a god as fell that day ?
My parents, in my babyhood,
 Instructed me
 To bow the knee
To Israel's mighty God.

O may I be more wise and good
Than those who worship stone and wood :
For every sin the Lord abhors,
 And he will cast
 In hell at last
All those who break his laws.

LESSON V.

SAUL, OR THE KING.

1 SAMUEL, 8; 9; 10.

WHO was the King of the Israelites? God was the King of the Israelites. When Samuel was grown up to be a man, he was called a judge; but he was not a king. He used to tell the people what God wished them to do; and he used to punish bad people. Moses had once been the judge of Israel, and Joshua had once been the judge, and Eli had once been the judge. Now, Samuel was called the judge. He did not sit on a throne, or wear a crown, as kings do; and he always asked God to tell him what the people ought to do, and then he told the people what God had said. The Israelites ought to have been very glad that God was their King. No other king was as good and as great as he was.

You will be sorry to hear, that at last they grew tired of having God for their King. They said, We should like to have a king that would go out to battle before us. They wanted to have a king that they could see. So they came to Samuel, and said, Give us a king.

Samuel was very sorry to hear this, and he

went and prayed to the Lord. Do you think that God would let the Israelites have a king? Yes, he would: he was displeased with them for wishing for a king; but as they wanted a king, God said they should have one.

So Samuel called the Israelites together to speak to them, and then he said, God will let you have a king; but this is the way in which the king will treat you. He will make your sons work for him: some of them will run before his chariots; and some will make swords and spears for him, and some will plough his ground, and reap his corn; and some of your daughters will bake, and cook, and make nice things for him to eat; and he will take away many of your fields, and gardens, and corn, and sheep from you, and give them to whom he pleases; and then you will be sorry that you wished for a king, and you will cry to God, and he will not hear you.

Did the Israelites still wish for a king? Yes, they would not mind what Samuel said; but they cried out, We will have a king.

Then all the people went home.

Who do you think would say what man was to be king?

God was to choose the king; and God would tell Samuel who was to be king.

I shall tell you about the man whom God chose to be the king of Israel.

There was a young man, whose father had some fields, and sheep, and cows, and asses. One day three asses were lost; so the young man went to look for them among the hills and fields. The young man's name was Saul. He took a servant with him, and he looked for the asses a long while, but he could not find them. At last Saul came near the city where Samuel lived.

The servant said to Saul, I have heard that there is a man in that city who is a prophet: all he says comes true. Let us ask him where the asses are. Then Saul said to his servant, Come, let us go. So Saul and the servant went into the city, and as they went along they met Samuel. Saul and the servant had never seen Samuel before; so they did not know who he was. Samuel was an old man, and his hair was long, and he used to wear a cloak.

Saul spoke to this old man, and said, Can you tell me where the prophet's house is?

Samuel answered, I am the prophet.

Did Samuel know who Saul was? Yes, he did; for though Samuel had never seen him before, God had told Samuel that he would meet a man just at that time, who was to be the king of Israel. Samuel knew who Saul was, and he knew that Saul wanted to ask him where the asses were.

Before Saul had told him that he had lost some asses, Samuel said, The asses that you lost three days ago are found. And Samuel told Saul that he had a great deal to say to him, and that he must come home with him that evening, and that he would let him go away the next morning.

So Saul and the servant went to Samuel's house, and Samuel took Saul to the top of his house, and talked to him alone; but I do not know what he said to him.

The next morning they all got up very early, as soon as it was light, and Samuel walked with Saul and the servant through the city. When they were come to the outside of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before. So the servant passed on before; and Samuel and Saul stood still together quite alone.

Then Samuel took a bottle of oil, that he

had brought with him, and poured it on Saul's head, and said to him, God has chosen thee to be king over Israel.

Why did Samuel pour the oil upon Saul's head? It was as a sign that he was to be the king. Pouring oil upon a person is called anointing him.

After Samuel had anointed Saul, they parted from each other. Saul went on his way, and returned to his friends: but he did not tell any one that he was to be the king of Israel.

Soon afterwards Samuel called all the Israelites together, to tell them who was to be the king.

Samuel told them that it was very wicked in them not to like to have God for their King, but still he said they should have a king.

Samuel showed the people who was to be the king. When the people saw Saul, they were very much pleased, for he was taller than any of the Israelites: no one else reached higher than his shoulder. The Israelites wished to have a king that would look very grand when he went out to battle.

The Israelites shouted when they saw him, and cried out, God save the king!

When the people had seen their king, they went home to their houses.

You will soon hear what sort of a king Saul was, whether he loved God, or whether he did not.

Did the Israelites deserve to have a good king? No. How ungratefully they had behaved to God, who had been so kind to them. How ungrateful they were to Samuel, who had been their judge. But Samuel was not angry with them, he was only sorry that they were wicked. Samuel went on teaching them and persuading them to be good.

Do you not hope to find that Saul was a good king?

Are foolish Israel weary grown
Of their great King above—
Of Him who chose them for his own,
And blessed them with his love?
O where can they another find
So wise, so powerful, or so kind?

But foolish Israel long to be
Like heathen nations round;
To have a king whom they can see,
With earthly splendor crowned;
Who in the battle shall appear
And fill their enemies with fear.

CHILD.

O may I never weary grow
Of those sweet, pleasant ways
In which I have been taught to go,
E'en since my infant days;
And may I never wish to be
Like those who care not, Lord, for thee

Let me not join the careless throng
Who break the Sabbath-day;
Nor waste my youth in dance and song,
Decked out in garments gay;
But let me leave each earthly thing,
And cleave to God, my heavenly King.

LESSON VI.

SAUL, OR THE DISOBEDIENT DEED

1 SAMUEL, 15.

I HAVE told you how God made Saul the king of Israel. Saul sat upon a throne, and wore a crown, and went to battle in a chariot. He was a brave man, and could fight well against wicked soldiers who tried to hurt the Israelites.

Samuel used often to come and see him, and advise him to serve God. Samuel wished Saul to be good, and he often prayed for him.

At last God chose to see whether Saul would do all he desired him to do. You remember how God once tried Abraham; and how Abraham did what God desired him, because he loved God. What was it that Saul was to do?

There were some wicked people who lived near the land of Canaan, called the Am-a-lek-ites. God was displeased with them, and he chose that they should all be killed.

One day Samuel came to Saul, and said to him, God commands you to go and fight

against the Amalekites, and kill them all, men, women, and children, and oxen, and sheep, and camels, and asses.

Saul got a great army of Israelites, and went to the Amalekites, and conquered them. Then Saul ordered his soldiers to kill them with their swords, as God had told him. But he thought he should like to take the king of the Amalekites back to Canaan with him; so he would not let him be killed. I think Saul liked to bring the king home with him, because he thought it was a grand and fine thing to have a king shut up near him in Canaan. Neither did Saul kill the fat and strong oxen, and sheep; he only killed those that were thin and weak. Saul wished to be rich, and to have a great many cattle.

Did Saul obey God? No; Saul did not love God; so Saul did not wish to obey him.

My dear children, if you love God you will like to obey him.

That night God spoke to Samuel, and told him that he was much displeased with Saul.

Samuel was grieved to hear this, and he prayed to God all night.

The next morning Samuel went to look for

Saul, for God had told him many things that he must say to him.

Saul did not know that Samuel knew of his wickedness; so he tried to make Samuel think that he had done all that God had told him.

When Saul saw Samuel he pretended to be glad to see him, and said, I have done the commandment of the Lord. Then Samuel said, What is this bleating of sheep, and lowing of oxen, that I hear?

Now Saul saw that Samuel knew what he had done. He saw it would be of no use to say, that he had not saved the sheep and oxen, so he began to make excuses for himself.

Saul said, It was the people who would not kill the fat sheep and oxen.

Was it the people who had saved the sheep and oxen? Had not Saul saved them too? And why did Saul let the people do wickedly? Was he not the king? Should he not have made them do what was right?

Would God have those sheep and oxen to be offered in sacrifice to him? No; God would rather that Saul should obey him, than that he should offer sacrifices.

Then Samuel told Saul that God was very angry with him, and did not mean to let him be king much longer.

Saul was very much frightened when he heard that God would punish him, and he said to Samuel, Do stay and pray to God with me. But Saul was not really sorry; he was only afraid of being punished. Samuel knew that he was not sorry for having offended God, who had been so good to him, and Samuel would not stay with him. Then Saul took hold of Samuel's cloak, to hinder him from going away, and he tore the cloak.

Samuel stopped, and said to Saul, God has torn the land of Canaan from you, and he has given it to a man that is better than you are. God has done it already, and he will not change his mind.

Saul begged Samuel very much to stay with him, and to pray to God with him, that the people might not know that God was angry with him. You see that Saul cared more about what people thought of him, than about God's being pleased with him.

At last Samuel said that he would worship God with him.

Then Samuel desired to see the king of the Amalekites, whom Saul had saved alive.

This king was a very wicked, cruel man, and God chose that he should be killed. He had hoped that as Saul had not killed him, he should not die; but Samuel took a sword and killed him.

Then Samuel left Saul, and he never came to see him any more; but he still was very sorry to think that he was so wicked.

I hope, my dear children, that when you offend God, you will feel sorry. If you love God, you will not like to displease him. Saul did not love God; he only cared about being punished.

Do you know whom God intended to make king instead of Saul? I will soon tell you his name. You will see he was a better man than Saul.

Why was it so wicked in Saul not to kill the king of the Amalekites, and the fat cattle? Because God had told him to kill them. We ought to do what God tells us to do. Has he told you to kill wicked people? No; but he has told you to pray to him, and to be kind, and to speak truth, and a great many things besides.

“O turn once more, and pray with me,”
King Saul exclaimed most earnestly.
O why does he thus sorrow show;
Why fear to see the prophet go?

Alas, he has such evil done,
That God will chase him from his throne
Nor will the Lord in mercy spare,
Nor listen to the prophet's prayer.

Saul does not of his sin repent,
But merely dreads the punishment;
And could he still retain his throne,
He would not heed God's holy frown.

CHILD.

O Lord, when I have broke thy laws,
Is my heart only grieved because
I fear lest thou should plunge my soul
Where fiery waves for ever roll?

Or is it grieved because I've sinned
Against a God so good and kind?
Do I feel thus? Then by this sign
I know that I'm a child of thine.

LESSON VII.

DAVID, OR THE YOUNG SHEPHERD.

1 SAMUEL, 16: 1-14.

SAMUEL did not know whom God meant to make king instead of Saul. At last God said to him, Fill a horn with oil, and go to Jesse who lives in Bethlehem, for I have chosen one of his sons as the king.

Jesse was an old man, and he had a great many sons, who were grown up to be men. Samuel found Jesse and his sons in Bethlehem. Then Samuel looked at the eldest of Jesse's sons, to see whether he was the man that God had chosen to be king.

Now this son was a very tall, fine-looking man, who seemed fit to be a king, and Samuel thought to himself, Surely this is the one that God will choose for me to anoint.

But God told Samuel that he had not chosen him. God does not care how a person looks, but God cares for the heart. Now the heart of Jesse's eldest son did not please God, and this time God was going to choose a king who loved him in his heart.

Then Samuel looked at Jesse's second son ;

but when he saw him, he said that God had not chosen him. Then Samuel looked at the third son; but God had not chosen him. Then he looked at the fourth; neither had God chosen him. Then Samuel looked at the fifth, next at the sixth, and last of all at the seventh; and yet God had not chosen any of them.

So Samuel said to Jesse, Have you any more children?

And Jesse answered, I have one more child, the youngest, and he is keeping the sheep. Then Samuel said, Send and bring him: I want to see him immediately.

So Jesse sent a person to desire this youngest son to come to him.

The name of this son was David. He was not a grown up man, but only a boy. He had a beautiful color on his cheeks, and his eyes had a pleasant look.

But did he love God in his heart? Yes; he did love God.

When he came in, God said to Samuel, Arise and anoint him; for this is he. So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him, while his seven brothers stood by.

Then Samuel went back to his own house.

You will hear a great deal about David. God did not mean that he should become king for a long while; but David knew that he certainly should be king one day. He went on keeping his father's sheep. As he watched them, he played on his harp, and sung sweet songs of praise to God. His songs are called Psalms.

Do you think that David wished to be king? I do not think he wanted to sit on a throne, and to wear a crown, but I know that he would like to call people together to praise God. When David was king, he could have people taught about God; and he could be kind to poor people, and he could punish wicked people.

When Samuel poured the oil on David's head, God made his Spirit come on him to make him very wise and brave, and fit to be a king; for it is God who makes people wise and brave.

Old Jesse's sons in order due
Once passed before the prophet's view:
The eldest son, of stately height,
Was not accepted in God's sight.
Six others came, by Jesse led,
Yet on their heads no oil was shed.

Where was that fairer, younger one,
Whom God would place on Israel's throne?
Beside his father's flock he stayed,
And on his harp he sweetly played:
On him the holy oil was poured,
For he was chosen of the Lord.

'Twas not his lovely form, or face,
That made him with the Lord find grace;
But God, who ev'ry secret knew,
Saw in his heart affection true,
That still his gracious favor sought,
And on his loving-kindness thought.

The holy Samuel could not tell
Which son the Lord approved well:
Men see our looks, our words they hear,
But cannot know whose heart's sincere
The Lord into each bosom pries,
And pierces through each fair disguise

CHILD.

O tell me, Lord, my real state,
Lest I should knock at heaven's gate,
And hear a voice within declare
That I can never enter there.
O has my heart been born again;
Or do I still in sin remain?

LESSON VIII.

DAVID, OR THE HARP.

1 SAMUEL, 16:14, TO END.

DID Saul know who was to be king instead of him? No; Samuel did not tell Saul what he had done. Saul would have been very angry, if he had known that David had been anointed; but he did not know it.

Yet Saul was very unhappy. God had let a wicked spirit come into him. Saul felt frightened and uneasy, so that he could not rest. He lived in a fine house called a palace, but this did not make him happy; he had many servants to wait upon him, but they could do him no good. You see, my dear children, what a sad thing it is to offend God. God can make people happy, and he can make them unhappy.

What should Saul have done when he was so unhappy? He should have prayed to God to forgive him. But he did not love praying to God.

Saul's servants saw that he had a wicked spirit in him, and they said to him, Shall we look for a man who can play very sweetly on

the harp? Perhaps, if you were to listen to very sweet music, you might get well.

Then Saul answered his servants, Look for such a man, and bring him to me.

Whom could the servants send for? One of the servants had heard of David, and he said to Saul, I have seen one of the sons of Jesse, who lives at Bethlehem, and he can play beautifully on the harp; and besides this, he is a very brave young man, and he can speak very wisely, and he is very handsome; and God loves him: shall I send for him?

Saul said that he would have this young man sent for. Some of Saul's servants went to Jesse and said, King Saul wishes to see your son David, who takes care of the sheep.

Jesse said that David might go: and he told David to take a present to king Saul. What was the present? Some bread, a kid, which is a young goat, and-a bottle of wine. David put all these things upon an ass, and brought them to Saul. When Saul saw David he loved him very much. Perhaps Saul loved him because he had a sweet look, and could play well on the harp; but God loved him because David wished to please him.

Saul liked David so much that he wished David to stay with him a long while, and to be always near him. So Saul sent a message to Jesse, to say that he wished to keep him.

David very often played to Saul upon the harp, and when David played he grew better, and at last he grew quite well.

At last David went away from Saul, and fed his father's sheep as he used to do.

I think David liked taking care of his father's sheep better than living with Saul; for Saul was wicked, and many of his servants were wicked.

David was very happy when he was alone, thinking about God. Did you ever hear any of David's psalms? In one of his psalms he calls God his Shepherd. David took great care of his sheep, and led them to places where green fresh grass grew, and to smooth and clear water; and he made them lie down on the softest grass in cool places by the river's side. While David was taking so much care of his sheep, he thought that God took still more care of him; and he said, The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want; he maketh

me to lie down in green pastures, and beside still waters. What are pastures? Grass. And what are still waters? Smooth waters.

Have you a shepherd, my dear children? I hope that the Lord is your Shepherd too, and that you are his dear little lambs. Jesus is the good Shepherd, who died to save you. He loves you very much, and wishes to make you happy. Do you wish to be his little lambs? Jesus will be so kind to you, he will keep you from Satan, he will put his Spirit in you, he will comfort you when you are unhappy, and at last he will take you to heaven.

How happy those little children are who love Jesus.

LESSON IX.

DAVID, OR THE GIANT GOLIATH.

1 SAMUEL, 17:1-54.

You remember who the Philistines were. They were wicked people, who lived in some of the cities of Canaan. They often fought against the Israelites.

One day a great number of Philistines came, and placed their tents on the top of a hill in Canaan. When Saul heard it, he came with a great number of Israelites, and they placed their tents on another hill. The Philistines and the Israelites could see each other in their tents, and they intended to fight against each other; but they did not choose to fight immediately.

There was one man among the Philistines whose name was Goliath. He was called a giant, because he was very tall indeed. He was ten feet high.

He was very strong and big, and he could fight well. He wore armor. What is armor? Clothes made of iron, and brass; people used to wear armor, that arrows and swords and spears might not hurt them easily.

He wore a cap of brass upon his head, and

he wore a coat of iron : his legs were covered with brass. He held a great spear in his hand, and he had a great sword in a sheath by his side ; and a man went before him with a shield. What is a shield ? It is a great piece of iron, or brass, like a large tray, which men used to hold before their faces in battle to prevent the arrows hurting their faces.

This giant Goliath thought that no one could kill him. Every day he used to call out with a loud voice, Will one of the Israelites come and fight with me ? If he is able to kill me, then all the Philistines will obey the king of Israel ; but if I kill him, then the Israelites must obey the Philistines. Is there any man that will fight with me ?

Would any of the Israelites fight with the giant ?

No, not one. When Saul heard the Philistine giant, he was frightened, and all the Israelites were frightened. They all thought they should be killed, if they fought with the giant. And do you think, that if one of them had fought with him, he would have been killed ? Could not God have helped the Israelites to conquer ?

Where was David? Was he among the tents of Israel? No; he was feeding his father's sheep, but David's three elder brothers were in the tents.

One day Jesse said to his son David, Go to the tents of Israel, and see how your brethren are; and take with you some corn, and ten loaves, as a present for your brothers.

So David rose up very early, and left his sheep with another shepherd, and took the corn and bread with him, and went a long way, till he came to the hill where the tents of the Israelites were. Then he ran to look for his brothers. As he was talking with his brothers, he heard a man speaking in a very loud voice, saying, Who is able to fight with me? It was the giant Goliath. David had never heard the giant speak these words before, but the people who were near David told him about the giant, and they said, King Saul has promised to give any man who kills the giant a great many things as a reward.

David was surprised that people should be afraid of fighting with the giant, because he knew that God could help an Israelite to conquer him, but he knew that the gods of the

Philistines could not help them, because they were only idols; so David said, Who is this Philistine, that he should speak in this manner to the people of God? And David felt in his heart that he should not be afraid to fight with the giant.

One of David's brothers heard what David said, and he began to mock David: Why did you come here? Why did you not stay with your sheep? But David answered his brother very meekly.

Very soon some one went and told Saul that there was a young man come to the tents, and that he said he would fight with the giant. So Saul desired the young man to be brought before him; and David came to Saul. Saul had seen David before; but Saul had forgotten him. Saul was surprised that David, who was so young, should wish to fight with the giant; and he said to him, You are not able to fight against that Philistine. You are very young, and he has been used to fight. Then David answered, Once when I was keeping my father's sheep, a lion came and took a lamb out of the flock, and I went after the lion, and met him, and took the lamb out of

his mouth; and when the lion tried to kill me, I caught him by his hair and killed him. And once a bear came, and I killed him too. I shall kill this Philistine, as I killed the lion and the bear. It was God who delivered me from the paw of the lion, and of the bear, and he will deliver me from this Philistine.

You see, my dear child, that David was not proud of his strength, but he knew that God could help him.

When Saul heard David speak these words, he told him to go and fight the giant. But David had no sword, or coat of iron, so Saul lent him his own armor, and his own sword; he put a cap of brass on David's head, and dressed him in a coat of iron. But David had not been used to wear armor; so he said to Saul, I cannot wear this armor. And he took it off again; neither would he take a sword, or a spear. He went to the brook and chose five smooth stones, and put them in a bag which he had, and took the bag with him, and a sling. You will hear what he did with the bag, and the stones, and the sling. In the other hand he held a staff. Then David went to meet the giant.

The giant heard that one of the Israelites was ready to fight with him, and he came near to David: a man with a shield went before him.

When the giant looked and saw David, he was surprised: he had expected to see a great man like himself, dressed in armor, and holding a spear in his hand.

But David was very young, and his face was rosy like a child's, and he only wore a shepherd's dress, and he held a staff in his hand.

The Philistine giant was angry when he saw him, and cursed him, and used very wicked words. Then he began to laugh at David, and said, Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds and to the beasts to eat.

But David was not afraid, and he said to the giant, You have a sword, and a spear, and a shield, but God will fight for me; and he will help me to kill you, and to take your head from you; and the beasts and the birds shall eat up the flesh of all the Philistines, and every body will see that the God of Israel is the true God, and that he can save whom he pleases.

Then the Philistine giant came still nearer to David, and David ran towards him quickly, and put his hand in his bag, and drew out a stone, and put it in the sling that he had; then holding one end of the sling, he threw the stone out of it with all his strength, and the stone hit the giant in the forehead, and it sunk into it, and the giant fell upon the ground on his face.

Then David ran to the giant, and taking the giant's sword out of its sheath, he cut off his head. When the Philistines saw what a great wonder God had done, they were frightened; and the Israelites shouted, for they saw that their God fought for them, and they ran after the Philistines, and the Philistines tried to run away; but the Israelites overtook a great many of them, and killed them. David showed the head of the Philistine to a great many of the Israelites, and he kept the armor that the Philistine had worn.

Did David thank God for helping him to conquer the giant? O yes; he sung God's praises and played upon his harp. David did not wish people to praise him; he wished every body to praise God. He wished all people to

say, How great God is! he helped the poor young shepherd to conquer the great giant.

Proud people wish to be praised; but people who love God, wish people to praise God. If God helps you to do good, my dear children, you ought to praise God for helping you to be good: if you remember things you are taught, you ought to praise God for helping you to remember. What do you say in the Lord's prayer about praising God? You say, Hallowed be thy name; which means, Let God's name be praised.

Upon those hills two armies stand,
A conflict to behold:
The shepherd youth has raised his hand
Against the giant bold.

A stone which from the brook he fetched
Now gives the deadly wound;
Ah, see the great Philistine stretched
Expiring on the ground.

It was the power of God alone
Made David's arm so strong;
And now he wakes the harp's sweet tone,
And pours a grateful song.

O that all nations now would own
That God can save from death;
O that all idols now were thrown
In darkest caves beneath.

LESSON X.

DAVID, OR THE JAVELIN.

1 SAMUEL, 17:55, TO END; 18; 19:1-10.

SAUL was very glad that David had killed the giant Goliath. David was brought to Saul that Saul might speak to him. He came in with the giant's head in his hand. Then Saul said to David, Whose son are you, young man? And David answered, I am the son of Jesse, who lives at Bethlehem.

While Saul was talking to David, there was a person standing near whom you have not heard of before; it was the son of Saul. He was a grown up man, very brave, and very good; his name was Jonathan; he was a prince, because he was the king's son; and the king's son is called a prince.

Jonathan began to love David very much indeed. What could make Jonathan love David so much? I think he loved David because David was so brave and so good. David had also a very sweet look. Still, it was God made Jonathan love David so much. Jonathan told David that he loved him, and

they both promised always to be kind to each other. Jonathan gave his own clothes to David, and wore other clothes, and he also gave him his sword, and his bow.

Saul told David that he must not go back to live with his father again, but that he must stay with him. So David and Jonathan saw each other very often. How much that must have pleased them, for friends like to be together.

Perhaps you think that David now was very happy. But there was one thing that soon happened to make him sad. I will tell you what it was.

After the Philistines had been killed in the battle, the Israelites went back to their homes, and did not live in tents any more. Saul and Jonathan, and David, went to the place where the king lived. As they were going along, they saw a great many women with harps in their hands, and these women played as they went, and sung, and danced. They were singing about David, and how he had killed the Philistines, and they said in their song that David had killed a great many more men than Saul. These are the words they sung: Saul

has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

Do you think that David liked to hear these songs? No. David did not wish to be praised; he wished God to be praised. He would have liked to hear the women say that God had helped a poor shepherd to kill the giant.

But when Saul heard these songs he was very angry; for he wished to be praised, and he could not bear to hear David praised more than himself. What, thought Saul, do they say that David has killed more Philistines than I have? Is he braver than I am? How wicked Saul was. He was envious; he was like Joseph's brothers, and he was like Cain.

Then Saul thought, Perhaps David is the man who is to be king instead of me. Saul remembered that Samuel had told him that God had chosen a better man than he was to be king.

Did Saul guess right? Yes.

Then Saul hated David, and wished to kill David. Saul had these wicked thoughts in his mind when he came back to his own house. Instead of thanking God for his kindness in having helped the Israelites to conquer the

Philistines, he was thinking how he could kill David.

The next day after he came home, God let the evil spirit come into him again. David saw that Saul was ill, and unhappy. How did David try to make him well?

He took his harp as he used to do, and began to play sweet music. Now Saul had a sharp thing in his hand called a javelin; and Saul thought to himself, I will throw this at David, and it shall go through his body. But David saw the javelin coming, and he slipped out of the way, so that Saul did not hurt him. Then Saul threw it at him again, but he could not hurt David. God took care of David.

Every one but Saul loved David, and this made Saul hate him still more.

David behaved so well, that Saul could not find any fault in him, for which he could punish him. Then Saul told David to take some men, and to go and fight against the Philistines. Why did Saul send David to fight? Saul hoped that the Philistines would kill David in battle. David went and killed a great many Philistines, but no one hurt him. Every body praised him more, and called him brave.

Saul grew more angry. At last Saul told all his servants to kill him; but they loved David, and would not kill him. Still, Jonathan was afraid lest some wicked person should mind Saul, and kill David; so Jonathan told David to hide himself, while he begged his father to forgive him. So Jonathan said to his father, Why do you wish to kill David? What has he done? Did he not once kill the giant? Then you were glad: why are you angry with him now?

It was kind in Jonathan to beg for David. It is kind in children to beg for each other when they are in disgrace. Saul promised that he would not have David killed. Then Jonathan called David and brought him to Saul, and David was with him as he used to be.

But soon Saul began to hate David again, and the evil spirit was on him still. Then David played on his harp to make him well: Saul had a javelin in his hand, and threw it at David; but David slipped out of the way, and the javelin stuck in the wall.

Now David was afraid of staying any more with Saul; and he fled away that night.

He did not go back to his father; for Saul

would have looked for him there, and would have found him ; but he hid himself in a great many places. You will hear of many sad things that happened to poor David. But God loved him, and took care of him. But Saul was miserable, for he was proud and envious like Satan.

I wish you, my dear children, to love one another, and not want people to notice you. I hope you will not envy one another, but be glad when other children are praised.

LESSON XI.

DAVID, OR THE CAVE.

1 SAMUEL, 24.

WHEN David fled from Saul he was obliged to leave his dear friend Jonathan. David and Jonathan kissed each other and shed many tears when they parted; but Jonathan chose to stay with his father king Saul. It was right in Jonathan to stay with his father. Where did David hide himself? There were very high hills in Canaan, and there were large holes in these hills, called caves.

Very few people lived among these hills; but sheep fed upon the fresh grass that grew on them, and goats leaped and sported on the tops of the hills.

David was not alone. His brothers came to him, besides a great many poor people. These people liked to be with David, to help him, because Saul had desired his servants to kill David. But these people were friends to David. David had God for his friend too.

David and his friends lived together in a large cave; for some caves are very large, and

will hold as many people as you see at church on Sunday.

How did poor David and his friends get food? Kind people gave them food; for God made some people love David, and be kind to him. Saul was very angry when he heard that any one was kind to David. Saul used often to tell people that David was wicked, and that David wished to kill him. Was that true? No. Some people believed what Saul said, and thought that David was really wicked, and mocked and abused David when they saw him.

Poor David! It made him sad to think that people believed that he wanted to kill Saul. But it was a comfort to David to think that God knew that he did not want to kill Saul. So David used to comfort himself by praying to God. He sometimes asked God to look into his heart, to see whether he wished to kill Saul. David had his harp with him in the cave; he often sung psalms, and praised God for keeping him from being hurt, though so many people were watching to kill him.

David did not always live in the same cave, lest wicked people should tell Saul where he

was hid. So David sometimes hid himself among the thick trees in the wood, and sometimes in one cave, and sometimes in another.

Saul took a great many soldiers, and came to look for David among the hills, but God did not let Saul find him. Saul said to the people he met, Have you seen David and his men? If you love me, you will tell me where he is, for David wants to kill me. Then some people would tell Saul, He is in the cave in that hill. But when Saul got to the place, he could not find David; for David heard that Saul was looking for him, and he had gone to another cave.

Saul was almost tired of looking for David, when something happened which you will like to hear.

Are caves dark inside, or light? Very dark; because, though there is a hole to go in at, there are no windows to let in the light. One day David was in a very large cave with his men, when Saul and his men passed that way. Saul did not know that David was in the cave. Had he known it, he and his soldiers would have killed David, and all his friends. But Saul saw the cave, and he wished to go into it

to sleep for a little while ; so he left his men outside, and came in quite alone. David and his men saw him come in, but Saul did not see David and his men, because they were in the dark parts of the cave. How surprised David was to see Saul. David and his men remained very quiet, and Saul lay down to rest himself. Then David's men said to him in a low voice, Now you can kill Saul if you wish it. Would David kill Saul ? No, said David, I will not hurt the man whom God made king. And David would not let his men hurt Saul ; but he went gently up to Saul as he lay asleep, and cut off a piece of his clothes. You will soon learn the reason why he did this.

After a little while Saul rose up, and went out of the cave ; and he and his men went on looking for David among the hills. Then David came out of the cave, and called in a loud voice after Saul, My lord the king ! Then Saul looked behind him, and David bowed himself down to the ground. How surprised Saul must now have been to see David. Then David spoke very meekly to Saul, and said, Why do you think that I wish to kill you ? You came into the cave where I was, and some

people advised me to kill you ; but I would not do it. Then David held up the piece of Saul's clothes that he had cut off. Look, my father, said David, at this ; I cut it off. Could I not have killed you ? Yes, I could ; but I would not. Why then do you hunt after me ? The Lord will keep me safe, and will not let you hurt me.

When David had done speaking, Saul said, Is that your voice, my son David ? And Saul began to weep. He had once loved David, and when he saw how good David was, he felt that he had been wicked ; but he did not feel sorry that he had offended God.

Yes, said Saul, I see that you are much better than I am, and that you do not wish to kill me ; and I know that you will be king one day.

So Saul did not try to kill David that day, and he left off looking for David, and went home with his men to his own house.

But David did not go and live with Saul, for he could not trust him. Once before, Saul had promised Jonathan that he would not try to kill David again, and yet he had broken his promise, and David knew that perhaps he

would soon try to kill him again. So David went back to his cave.

Saul was not sorry that he had offended God by his wickedness, and he did not ask God to forgive him, and to give him the Holy Spirit; so Satan soon got him to do wicked things again.

Now, my dear children, when you have been naughty, will you pray to God to forgive you; and will you ask him to put his Spirit in you?

If you do not ask God to make you good, the devil will make you more and more wicked.

Where wild goats sport among the rocks,
Where shepherds love to lead their flocks,
And find the freshest grass,
There David and his soldiers brave,
Within a deep and darksome cave,
Have found a hiding-place.

And now they hear the sound of feet,
And to the cave's dark sides retreat,
And there in silence stand;
But who is this that comes alone,
And in the cave awhile lies down,
Nor sees the warlike band?

Full well young David knows that fact?
'Tis his who goes from place to place
Seeking his blood to shed.
And shall he now unsheath his sword?
O no; the holy oil was poured
Upon that kingly head.

This is the hour that David may
His faithfulness to Saul display—
 So cuts the kingly skirts :
This skirt will prove that he was near,
Yet neither lifted sword nor spear
 To do his monarch hurt.

CHILD.

Jesus, my Lord, thus gently thou
Didst deal with wicked men below,
 Who sought thy blood to spill :
Nor will I let my anger burn,
But kindness ever will return
 To those who do me ill

LESSON XII.

DAVID, OR THE SPEAR.

1 SAMUEL, 26.

You know, my dear children, that Saul had left off looking for David, after David had spoken to him. But Saul soon began to hate David again. One day some wicked men came to him, and said, We can tell you where David has hid himself. Was it not very unkind in the men to tell Saul where poor David was? David had done them no harm, yet they behaved in this manner to him.

Saul was glad to hear where David was, and he took a great many soldiers with him and went to the place where he heard David was. Saul did not know the very place where David was, but he knew that David was hid in some place near.

Saul directed his men to set up their tents on a hill, and to dig a deep ditch all round the tents, that nobody might come to the tents to hurt them. In the night Saul and his men would sleep in their tents, and in the daytime they would look for David.

David heard that Saul was come to look for

him. How sorry David must have been to hear this. He could scarcely believe it; so he sent some men to go and look, to see whether Saul was really come; and the men came back, and told David that they saw his tents on the hill.

Then David went with some of his friends near the place where the tents were, and he said to his friends, Who will go with me among the tents? And one of David's friends said, I will go with you. Then David and his friend went in the night, and walked among the tents; but no one saw them, or heard them, as all the people were fast asleep; for God had made them sleep: even the people whom Saul had desired to watch, to prevent any body coming, even they had fallen fast asleep. God did not choose that David should be hurt; therefore he made the people sleep.

David got over the great ditch that had been dug; for there was nobody watching near to hinder him.

Into which of the tents do you think David went? Into the tent of Saul. He found him sleeping on his bed; and by his pillow he saw his spear stuck into the ground, and a jug of water;

and he saw other people, who ought to have watched over him, asleep round about him.

Saul little knew that David was so near him, looking at him as he slept.

Then David's friend said to him, Let me take this spear and kill Saul; I will pierce his body through in a moment.

Would David kill Saul?

No, said David, do not kill him: it would be very wicked to kill the man whom God has made king. When God wishes him to die, God will make him die, but I will not kill him. Only take the jug of water, and the spear, and let us go.

So they took the jug of water and the spear, and they went away from the tents; and nobody woke while they were passing.

Why did David take the jug and the spear? You remember why he had once cut off some of Saul's clothes. It was for the same reason he now took the jug and spear. He wished to show Saul that he had been near his bed while he was asleep, and that he might have killed him, if he had chosen it.

Then David went down the hill where Saul's tents were, and went up another hill; so there

was a great way between Saul and him ; yet, if David spoke loud, Saul could hear him. Then David cried out with a very loud voice to the men that were sleeping round king Saul, and said, Why did you let people come near the king while he was asleep ?

You know, my dear children, why they had not watched ; God had made them fall asleep.

Then David showed the people the king's spear and the jug of water.

When Saul heard David's voice, he remembered it, and wept.

He said, Is this thy voice, my son David ?

And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king. Why do you go on looking for me ? What wickedness have I done ? Have any wicked men told you that I wish to hurt you ?

Then Saul said, I have sinned. Go to your home again. I will never hurt you again, because you did not kill me to-day, when you might have done it. I have done very wickedly.

Was Saul very sorry for his wickedness ? O no. He did not pray to God to forgive him, and make him good.

Then David said, Here is the king's spear. Send one of your servants to get it.

Why would not David bring the spear to Saul himself? He could not trust Saul; he was not sure that Saul would not kill him.

Saul said, Blessed be thou, my son David And then Saul went home, but David went into the part of Canaan where the Philistines lived, that Saul might not be able to hurt him; and God made the Philistines kind to David.

David ought not to have gone to live with the Philistines, because they worshipped idols. David ought to have trusted in God to keep him safe among the caves and hills.

When Saul went home this time, did he pray to God to keep him from Satan, and from hating David again? If Saul had done this, God would have kept him. Let me tell you again, dear children, that this is the way to grow good. It is not enough to say, I will be good; I will not do that naughty thing any more. You should always pray to God to keep you from wickedness. For Satan is a great deal stronger than you; and unless God is with you, Satan can lead you to do wicked things. So, my dear children, if you wish not to mind Satan, ask God to put his Holy Spirit into your hearts.

LESSON XIII.

DAVID, OR THE PROMISE FULFILLED.

1 SAMUEL, 30; 2 SAMUEL, 1; 2:4; 5:1-3.

WHERE did David at last go to hide himself from Saul? To the land of the Philistines. You remember hearing of the Philistines; they were wicked people who worshipped idols, yet God made them kind to David, and to his men.

When Saul heard that David was gone to the Philistines, he went to look for him no more; because, if Saul had gone to them, they would have tried to kill him.

The time had now almost come when Saul must die. I will now tell you how he died.

You know that the Philistines hated the people of Israel, and used to fight against them. One day the king of the Philistines called a great many of his soldiers together, and took them to a place in the land of Canaan where they might fight with the Israelites. When Saul heard they had come, he took his soldiers and went to fight against them. Saul's good son Jonathan went with his father to the battle.

The Philistines and the Israelites fought together upon some hills. Who do you think conquered? The Philistines conquered. God was angry with the Israelites, and he did not help them to conquer. The Israelites ran away from the Philistines; even Saul and Jonathan, though they were very brave, ran away; and the Philistines ran after them, and they killed Jonathan. And did they kill Saul? This was the way in which Saul died. Some men with bows and arrows shot at him, and some of the arrows went into Saul's body, so that he could not run away any more: yet Saul was not killed by the arrows; he was only very much hurt.

When Saul found that he could not run away, he was very unhappy, for he was afraid that the Philistines would soon get hold of him, and treat him very cruelly; so he wished very much to die before they overtook him. Then Saul said to one of his soldiers, Take your sword, and run it through my body. Would it have been right in the soldier to kill Saul? If your brother were to ask you to kill him, might you kill him? No; you might not. God has said, "Thou shalt not kill."

The soldier would not kill Saul. Then Saul took his own sword, and fell upon the point of it; so it ran through his body, and he died. Was it right in Saul to kill himself? O no, he should have waited till God made him die. It is very wicked in people to kill themselves. People who love God wait till God takes away their breath.

When Saul was dead, the soldier who would not kill Saul when he had asked him, fell upon his sword, and died with him. The soldier saw Saul do a wicked thing, and he did the same.

The Philistines went on running after the Israelites all that day, and they killed a great many.

The next day the Philistines went to the hills where they had been fighting, to look at the dead people who were lying there. They found Saul's dead body, and Jonathan's dead body. How pleased they were to find that the king and his brave son were dead. But O, how shamefully they treated their bodies. They cut off Saul's head: they stripped off Saul's armor of iron and brass, and they sent his head and his armor to all the places where the Phi

listines lived; and they praised their idols, and said that their idols were greater than the God of Israel, because they said their idols had helped them to conquer the Israelites. Then they took Saul's armor, and put it in one of the houses where they worshipped idols; and they fastened his body to the wall of one of the idol's houses, that every body might see it. And they fastened Jonathan's body to the same place. Was not this a sad thing to happen to poor Jonathan? But God loved Jonathan. Where was Jonathan's soul? It was with God. But Saul's soul was not with God; and his body was in the idol's house.

Some of the Israelites heard where the Philistines had fastened the bodies of Saul and Jonathan; and these kind men travelled all night to the place, and took their bodies down from the wall, and burned them, and buried their bones under a tree.

Where was David all this time? He was in the land of the Philistines. He knew that Saul and Jonathan had been fighting a battle, and he longed to know who had conquered. At last a man who had been at the battle, came to David, to tell him about it. The man bowed

down to David, and David said, Where do you come from?

And the man said, I came from the tents of Israel.

Then David said, Pray tell me what has happened.

And the man said, The Israelites have run away, and many are dead; and Saul, and Jonathan his son, are dead also.

The man thought that David would have been very glad to hear that Saul was dead. But was David glad? No; he still loved Saul, and he was sorry too that the Philistines had conquered him, because he knew that the Philistines would praise their idols, and speak against the God of Israel, and David loved God so much, that he wished every body to praise him. And David was very sorry for Jonathan his friend. He would never see his face again in this world.

David sung a sweet song about Saul and Jonathan. He said that Saul and Jonathan had been like eagles and lions, they had been so brave: he said they had lived together, and had died together. And then he said in his song, I am distressed for thee, my brother Jon-

athan; thy love to me was wonderful. He called Jonathan his brother because he had been so very kind to him.

David did not speak of Saul's wickedness, he only spoke of his bravery; for he did not like to speak against the king.

Now the time had come when David was to be king. God put it into the hearts of the Israelites to ask David to be their king. And David said he would be their king. God had promised that David should be king, and God kept his promise, and made him king.

God always keeps his promises. What did God once promise Abraham? That he should have a son, and that his children's children should live in the land of Canaan. Did God keep these promises? O yes. What has God promised you, my dear children? To give you his Spirit if you ask him, and I know he will keep his promise to you. He will keep all his promises. He has promised, if you have his Spirit, to give you a crown of glory. I hope, dear children, that you will ask him for his Holy Spirit.

David praised God on his harp for keeping his promise to him; for taking him from keep-

ing sheep, to make him king over all the land. David wished to be a good king, and to do all that God told him, and to teach all his people to love God. He knew that God would bless him, and keep him from all harm.

THE DEATH OF SAUL.

Wounded with sharp arrows,
The king of Israel flies;
On the field of battle
By his own sword he dies.

How the heathen triumph
To find him 'mong the dead:
To their idol temples
They send his royal head.

Then with nails they fasten
His body to the wall:
All who pass by see it,
And mock the name of Saul.

He refused to honor
The great almighty Name:
God, in righteous anger,
Has covered him with shame.

THE BRAVE SHEPHERD.

Good David, whose psalms have so often been sung,
At first was not noble or grand,
But only a shepherd-boy when he was young,
Though afterwards king of the land.

He tended his flocks in the pastures by day,
And kept them in safety by night;
And though a poor shepherd, he did not delay
To do what was holy and right.

For while he sat watching his sheep in the fold,
To guard them from danger abroad,
It then was his greatest delight, we are told,
To think on the works of the Lord.

He gazed on the moon, and the stars in the sky,
Which God has appointed to shine,
And, "Lord, what is poor sinful man," he would cry,
"Compared with these wonders of thine?"

Thus seeking so early for knowledge and truth,
His childhood in wisdom began;
And therefore the Lord was the guide of his youth,
And made him so mighty a man.

When ready for battle Goliath appeared,
Young David first offered to go;
He knew that his God, whom he trusted and feared,
Would help him to conquer the foe.

In war and in fighting he had not been skilled,
Yet ventured to meet him alone;
And this mighty giant he presently killed
With only a sling and a stone.

So he soon was made king, for the prophets foretold
That God meant to honor him thus;
And if we will serve him like David of old,
The Lord will be mindful of us.

ANN and JANE TAYLOR.

LESSON XIV.

DAVID, OR THE ARK ON ZION

2 SAMUEL, 5: 7-11; 1 CHRON. 13; 15; 16; 17.

AT last David was made king, as God had promised. I will tell you the name of the city in which he lived; it was Jerusalem. David was born in Bethlehem, and there he kept sheep, but when he was king he lived at Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was a beautiful city. There were a great many hills in it. Do you not think hills very beautiful? One of the hills was called mount Zion.

David directed some men to build him a house upon mount Zion. Do you know what a king's house is called? It is called a palace. David's palace was on mount Zion.

David loved God very much, and so he thought he should like to have God's ark very near his palace.

Where was the ark?

You remember that the ark was once at Shiloh, and that the Philistines took it in battle, and that they sent it back to the Israelites:

but the ark never was taken back to Shiloh again. God would not let the wicked people who lived in Shiloh have his ark any more. The ark had been kept in a man's house; David knew where it was, and he went himself to bring it; a great many priests went with David, and a great many people who played on musical instruments, such as harps and trumpets, and other instruments called cornets, and cymbals, and psalteries, and some people who sung sweet psalms in the praise of God, and there were some women playing on timbrels. So they brought the ark from the man's house to mount Zion in Jerusalem. David was dressed in a white ephod, and all the singers and players of music were dressed in white, and the priests were dressed in white.

David played upon his harp, and he went with the players and singers; and the ark came afterwards with the priests.

How beautiful it was to see all these men in white, and to hear them praising God.

Would not the sight have put you in mind of the angels of God in heaven?

A great many of the Israelites came to see this beautiful sight. They saw their king

praising God upon his harp. O how glad David felt that day.

The ark was taken up the hill called mount Zion. There were walls round the top of mount Zion, and large gates; the gates were opened wide to let the king come in, and the ark, which was the throne of the Lord. David had prepared a place made of curtains for the ark to be placed in. He had not brought the old tabernacle to mount Zion; but he had made a new tabernacle, close to his own palace. There the priests placed the ark, and David desired the singers to sing a psalm that he had written, beginning, "Give thanks unto the Lord."

David also offered some sacrifices upon mount Zion, and David blessed all the people that stood round. Before the people went home, he directed that every man and every woman should have some bread and some meat, and a little bottle of wine. Was not this very kind in David?

David was very glad that God's ark was near his own palace. He desired the singers and players on music to sing and play every day near the ark. He desired them to sing in

the night also: some used to sing in the day, and some used to sing in the night. They sung by turns. The angels in heaven can sing night and day without resting, but these singers could not do so. When David was in his palace, he could hear them singing God's praise: even at night, if he lay awake upon his bed, he could hear those sweet songs.

David wrote the psalms himself: God's Spirit taught him what to say. He sung the psalms to his own harp, and he wrote them down, and sent them to the singers, that they might sing them near the ark.

David did not always stay in his palace on mount Zion. He was often obliged to go out to fight against the Philistines, and other wicked people; and God helped David and his men to conquer them all. Then David used to return to mount Zion, and sing psalms to God for having helped him to conquer.

One day David was sitting in his beautiful palace, and he said to his friend Nathan, I live in a fine house, but God's ark is placed under curtains. And David wished to build a beautiful house for God's ark.

Nathan, David's friend, was a very wise

and very good man, and he advised David to build a house for the Lord.

In the night God spoke to Nathan, and said to him, Go tell David not to build me a house; I am pleased with David for wishing to build it, but I do not choose to have him build me one, because he has fought so many battles and killed so many people: I will give David a son who shall build me a house; but David shall go on fighting battles, and I will bless David always.

God was not displeased with David for fighting battles, only he did not choose that he should build him a house.

Then Nathan came to David in the morning, and told him what God had said.

David was much pleased to hear that God would bless him, and that he would give him a son who should build a house for God. So David went to thank God for his kind promises.

David said, O Lord, how kind thou hast been to me. And wilt thou still go on blessing me? I do not deserve such kindness. How can I thank thee enough? Pray go on blessing me, and loving me.

God liked David's prayer. David was not

proud. He wondered that God should be so kind to him, and that he should have taken him from being a shepherd to be a king over Israel, and he wondered that God should promise to bless him always, and to bless his son; for David knew that he deserved nothing, for he was but a poor sinner.

Has not God been kind to you, my dear child; and has he not promised to take you to live with him, if you ask him? Did you ever, my dear little child, wonder to yourself why God was so kind to you? It was not because you are good; for you are full of sin. It was because God is so good, and loves to bless people.

DAVID'S JOY.

Behold the pious king advancing
Amid the white-robed priestly train;
Behold him playing, singing, dancing,
His joy unable to restrain.

Now close beside king David's palace,
Within a tent, the ark shall dwell:
Let Israel fear no heathen malice,
For God himself shall guard it well.

Their watch the holy servants keeping,
With psalms shall cheer the silent night;
The monarch in his palace sleeping,
Shall wake and listen with delight

CHILD.

O may I love such holy pleasures,
And taste them in the courts above;
Where saints in softest, sweetest measures,
For ever praise the God they love.

DAVID'S WISH.

Once David in a palace dwelt,
Whose walls were built of cedar wood;
But sorrowful the monarch felt,
For in a tent God's ark abode.

He wished to build a temple grand,
Of marble, silver, brass, and gold,
Where men might flock from every land,
And Israel's God might be extolled.

His God approved the pious thought,
And yet his servant's wish denied,
Because in battles he had fought,
And human blood his hands had dyed

Yet when his days were all fulfilled,
God promised him a peaceful son,
Who should a glorious temple build,
And sit upon his father's throne.

CHILD

And did the Lord the wish approve,
Which showed affection true and warm?
Will he accept my thoughts of love,
Though I no glorious deed perform.

He knows my heart, he knows I long
That every ear should hear his word;
Till Jews and Turks and heathen throng
Into his house, and call him Lord.

LESSON XV.

DAVID, OR UURIAH'S WIFE.

2 SAMUEL, 11; 13:1-14.

WAS David a good man? O yes, he loved God, and tried to please him. What made David good? God's Holy Spirit. God put his Spirit into his heart; yet there was still wickedness in David's heart, as well as goodness. Satan, too, used to tempt David to do wicked things. Sometimes David did not pray to God to keep him from Satan, and then David used to mind what Satan said. Shall you not be very sorry to hear of a wicked thing that David did?

I am now going to tell you how David once displeased the Lord.

Once David's men went out to fight against some wicked people who lived near Canaan. David did not go himself to fight this time, but he told a man called Joab to take his soldiers to fight. This Joab was called David's captain, because a captain is a man that takes soldiers with him to battle, and tells them when to fight.

So David stayed at Jerusalem. I do not know why he did not go out to fight himself; I am afraid that he was idle, and liked better staying at home to eat and drink, and rest himself. It is very wrong to be idle. Did you ever hear this hymn?

“Satan finds some mischief still,
For idle hands to do.”

One day when it was hot David lay upon his bed, and when it grew cool he got up and walked on the top of his house, which was flat and level like a floor. As he was walking there, he looked down and saw a woman, whom he liked very much as soon as he saw her. David wished to have her for his wife; so he sent his servants to ask what her name was; and they came back and told him that her name was Bath-she-ba, and that she was married to a man called Uriah.

Could David have Bathsheba for his wife, if she was married to Uriah? O no; David could not take her away from Uriah to be his wife: that would have been wicked; for God has said in the ten commandments, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” David ought to

have prayed to God to keep him from thinking of Bathsheba any more; but he went on thinking of her, and wishing that she could be his wife; and he thought, If Uriah was dead, then Bathsheba could be my wife. Then he wished that Uriah was dead. Now Uriah was a very brave and good man, and he had gone with the captain Joab a great way off to fight against some wicked people.

David wished that Uriah might get killed in the battle. Was not that very wicked? God said in the ten commandments, "Thou shalt not kill;" and we must not even wish a person to be killed.

At last a very wicked plan came into David's heart. I will tell you what David did. David wrote a letter to Joab the captain, and this is what he wrote: When you take the people out to fight, let Uriah stand in a place where the wicked people will be able to shoot him.

How could David write such a letter? David sent the letter to Joab. Ought Joab to have done this wicked thing? O no, he ought not to have minded David. But Joab was a very wicked man, so he determined to do as the king told him.

Soon afterwards Joab took his soldiers to fight against a great city with walls all round it, and he told Uriah to go with some of the soldiers very near the walls of the city, and some of the men in the city shot arrows from the walls, and killed poor Uriah.

Then Joab sent a man to tell king David at Jerusalem that Uriah was dead.

Was David sorry when he heard that Uriah was killed? He pretended to be sorry, but he felt glad in his heart. You know why he was glad. Now Bathsheba could be his wife; so he sent for Bathsheba, and he married her, and she came and lived with him in his palace.

But God was displeased with what David had done.

One day, Nathan, who was a prophet, came to David.

God had told Nathan what David had done.

Nathan began by telling David a little history. He said, There were two men in one city; the one was rich, and the other was poor: the rich man had a great many sheep; the poor man had only one little lamb, which he had taken care of since it was first born; he fed it, and gave it drink out of his own

cup, and he nursed it in his bosom, and loved it as one of his children. One day a visitor came to the rich man's house, and the rich man sent and took the poor man's lamb, and killed it, and prepared it for dinner for his visitor. Then said Nathan, What shall be done to the rich man?

And David felt very angry with the rich man, and he said to Nathan, He shall die; and he shall give the poor man four lambs instead of the one which he took.

Then Nathan said to David, Thou art the man.

What did Nathan mean? Was David the man who had taken the poor man's lamb? No; David had not taken a lamb, but he had taken Uriah's wife, and that was much more wicked. Nathan had told him this history to show him what a wicked thing he had done. Did David deserve to die?

Nathan said to David, God has been very kind to you, and made you king. Why have you disobeyed his commandments? God will punish you for your wickedness. Your children shall fight each other, and kill each other, and behave very wickedly to you as long as you live.

David was very sorry when he heard that God was angry with what he had done, and he said, I have sinned against the Lord.

Then Nathan said, God has forgiven you, you shall not die.

David was really sorry for what he had done. He was not like Saul, who only cared for the punishment; he was most sorry because he had displeased God.

David sung a very sad psalm on his harp, and he gave it to the singers to sing near the ark.

He asked God in his psalm to wash out his sins. These were some of David's words. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

You see that David prayed to God to forgive him, and God did forgive him. God would not send David to hell, but he would forgive him, because Jesus had promised to die for him some day upon the cross. Yet still, God would punish David while he was alive, that all people might know that God hated wickedness.

I hope, dear children, that you will often

pray to God to keep you from Satan; but whenever you have done a wrong thing, I hope you will feel sorry, and that you will ask God to forgive you; and I know he will forgive you, because Jesus died on the cross for sinners.

If you do not feel sorry, then you should ask God to make you feel sorry; for it is God's Spirit that makes people sorry for their sins.

Can this be David—this the man,
Whose course in piety began?
Whose ways the holy God approved,
And whom he called his son beloved?
Ah, see him take the lamb away
That in Uriah's bosom lay;
And see Uriah, at his word,
Perish beneath a heathen sword.
Has he forgot God's love of old,
When first he took him from the fold:
And how with grateful heart he swore
To serve this God for evermore?
Why have his feet gone thus astray?
Ah, surely he forgot to pray;
For God will never leave to fall,
Those who on him for succor call.

CHILD.

Satan's nets are thickly spread
On every path my feet shall tread;
But they shall ne'er entangled be.
If, Lord, I fix my eyes on thee.

LESSON XVI.

DAVID, OR THE PUNISHMENT.

2 SAMUEL, 15; 16; 17.

You remember, my dear children, that God said he would punish David, though he had forgiven him.

David had a great many children, and some of them were very wicked when they grew up. I cannot tell you about all his bad children, but I will tell you of one called Absalom. He was a very proud young man; he was very handsome, and he had beautiful hair, and he was very vain of his beauty: he also told lies, and he even killed one of his brothers who had offended him. When David heard how Absalom had killed his brother, he was angry with him for a long time, and would not see him; but at last he let him come to his palace, and kissed him, and forgave him. David ought never to have allowed Absalom to come to Jerusalem again after he had killed his brother; but David was too fond of Absalom.

Yet Absalom did not love his father Da-

vid. He wished to be king instead of David, and so he behaved very kindly to all the people in Jerusalem, that they might love him better than they loved his father, and make him king. He used sometimes to kiss the poor people that he saw, and tell them that if he were king he would be very kind to them.

This kind way of behaving made the people love Absalom; for they thought that he really cared for them. How very sly and deceitful Absalom was. God did not love him.

When Absalom saw that many of the people loved him, he asked David's leave to go from Jerusalem into the country. And David gave him leave. David did not know what a wicked plan Absalom had made. This was the wicked plan.

Absalom had directed a great many men to wait till they heard the sound of a trumpet, and when they heard it, to cry out, Absalom is king. So, when Absalom had left Jerusalem, and come into the country, he desired the trumpet to be blown, and a great many of the people called out, Absalom is king; and came to Absalom to be his soldiers.

Poor David was in Jerusalem, and a messenger came and told him that Absalom had made himself king.

How grieved David was to hear this news. He could not bear to think that his son was so wicked as to make himself king. Then David thought of his own sin, and he felt that he deserved to be punished. He knew that it was God that let all these sad things happen to him.

David would not stay in Jerusalem, for he thought that Absalom would soon come there, and would perhaps kill him and his servants. So the king left his palace on mount Zion, to go a great way off. There were many people in Jerusalem who loved David, and they went with him.

First they crossed a little river that was outside Jerusalem, and as they went over, all the people wept. They wept to think that their dear king was obliged to leave his house, and to wander about without a home.

Then David and his servants went up a high hill, and David wept as he went up, and he covered his head, and he wore no shoes on his feet: he did these things to show he was

unhappy ; and all the people with him did the same, and wept as they went up. You see how much the people loved David.

And when David was come to the top of the hill, he prayed to God. He knew that God could comfort him in his distress.

Then David went on his journey. Soon he met a very wicked man who hated him, and who called David very bad names, and even threw stones at David and his soldiers. This wicked man called David a child of the devil, and said, You killed Saul, and his children, and now God is punishing you for your wickedness.

Had David killed Saul or his children ? O no. The man told lies of David. But David had killed Uriah, and God was punishing him for that sin.

One of David's friends said to him, Do not let that wicked man call you names ; let me go and take off his head.

But David said, No ; the Lord lets him curse me, and I will not hinder him. My own son seeks to kill me. I am not surprised that this man curses me.

How meekly David behaved. This was the

way that Jesus behaved to wicked people. You see, my dear children, what we should do when people are unkind and cruel to us. We ought not to give them rude answers; but we ought to think of the bad things we have done, and behave meekly.

This wicked man went on cursing and throwing stones and dust at David and his soldiers.

At last David and his men came to a place where they rested themselves, for they were very much tired. David and his soldiers travelled a long way. At last they crossed over the river Jordan. I believe they found some place where the water was not deep. On the other side there was a place called a wilderness.

There were three very rich men who lived near the wilderness, and who heard of poor David and his men having come there; and these rich men said, They must be very hungry, and thirsty, and weary in the wilderness; so they brought David and his men a great many things: beds to rest their weary limbs upon; and basins and cups to drink out of, and corn, and vegetables, and honey, and but-

ter, and cheese, and sheep to eat. These rich men were very kind; God put it in their hearts to be kind to poor David in his distress.

While David was in the wilderness, he often prayed to God, and asked God to comfort him. David felt that he deserved to be punished; so he behaved very meekly. This is the way, dear children, you should behave when you are punished for your faults. If you are really sorry, you will not be angry with the people who punish you; but when you are in disgrace, you will pray to God to forgive you, and to put his Spirit in your heart to make you good.

Alas, what mournful tones
Are heard from David's harp;
Ah, listen to those groans,
That tell of trouble sharp:
How different from the joyful strain,
That late made Zion ring again!

Ah, well may David weep;
He shed Uriah's blood.
Should not his grief be deep,
Who has offended God?
When God was pleased 'twas light around,
But all was darkness when he frowned.

And will the Lord again
Cheer David with his beams,
And wash away the stain
Of sin in mercy's streams?
Then David's heart with joy shall glow
His lips with praises overflow.

CHILD.

It often has grievèd me
To see my parent frown;
How can I happy be,
If God with wrath look down?
O Father, smile upon thy child,
And tell me thou art reconciled.

LESSON XVII.

DAVID, OR THE OAK-TREE.

2 SAMUEL, 18; 19:1-4.

DAVID and his men lived in a city in the wilderness. This city had walls and gates.

Absalom soon heard where his father David was, and he came after him with a great army. Absalom crossed over the river Jordan, and desired his men to set up their tents near the city where David was.

Then David saw that his wicked son meant to fight against him. So David one morning directed his soldiers to go out of the city. David was going with them; but they begged him not to come, lest he should be killed in the battle. These people loved him very much. Then the king said, I will do as you think best. David did not wish to go to this battle, for he did not like to fight against Absalom.

David told the soldiers, before they went to battle, not to hurt Absalom; for David still loved his wicked son.

Absalom and his soldiers came out to fight

against David's men. They fought in a wood. This was not a good place for fighting, for a great many people were knocked against the trees, and bruised, and killed.

Who do you think conquered? David's men; because God helped them, and Absalom's men tried to run away, and a great many of them were killed by the swords of David's men, and still more were killed by the trees of the wood.

Now you shall hear what became of Absalom.

He rode upon a mule—which is a beast very much like a horse—and as he was riding, he passed under a great oak-tree, and his beautiful long hair was caught in the boughs; and the mule ran away, and left him hanging by the hair in the tree, with his feet lifted up from the earth. You remember how proud he was of his hair. God let that very hair be fastened to the tree. We should pray to God not to let us be proud of any thing we have. One of David's soldiers saw him, and went to the captain Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak. Then Joab said, And why did you not kill him? If you had, I would

have given you a great deal of silver, and some clothes. But the man answered, If you would have given me a thousand pieces of silver, I would not have hurt Absalom, for I heard the king desire that no one should hurt him. Then Joab went very quietly to the oak-tree, and he found Absalom still hanging there. So he took three darts, and thrust them through Absalom's heart, just through the middle of his body; and ten young men that were with Joab, hurt him also with swords, or darts, and killed him.

How frightened Absalom must have felt when he was hanging in the oak. I wonder whether he prayed to God to forgive him. Perhaps he did not wish to pray; for he did not love God. Perhaps he only felt frightened lest any one should kill him, and did not fear the anger of God. The darts must have hurt his body very much, and must have covered him with blood. Did he not well deserve to feel pain? What pain he had made his father feel in his mind.

Joab took his body down from the tree, and cast it into a pit in the wood, and laid a great heap of stones on the top.

When Absalom was dead, Joab blew a trumpet to call back his soldiers from running after Absalom's soldiers; for, now Absalom was dead, the Israelites might leave off fighting. Absalom's soldiers went back to their tents, and Joab took his soldiers back to the city where David was.

But before Joab and his men went back, two men ran very fast to tell David what had happened.

How much David longed to know whether Absalom was dead. David wished his men to conquer, and yet he did not wish Absalom to be killed.

David sat near the gates inside the city where he was. A man stood upon the top of the wall near the gate, to watch to see whether any person was coming into the city. Soon the watchman saw a man running, and he cried out loud, I see a man running alone. Then said David, No doubt he brings some message. Soon afterwards the watchman cried out, I see another man running alone. Then David said, He also brings a message.

Soon the first man who was running came up, and cried out, All is well.

He said all was well, because David's men had conquered. Then the man fell down to the ground upon his face before the king, and he thanked God for having let David's men conquer. Then the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe. The messenger knew that Absalom was dead, but he did not like to grieve David by telling him this sad news all at once; so he said, There was a great deal of noise and confusion when Joab sent me here. The man did not tell David what this noise was about.

Soon the other man came running up to David, and he said, God has punished the wicked people, who fought against the king. Then the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe?

And the messenger answered, May all people who fight against the king, be as Absalom now is. The king knew that the man meant that Absalom was dead. How very unhappy the king was when he heard this. He went into a room that was near the gate, and he wept as he went up, and he said, "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

When David's soldiers were coming back into the city, they heard how much the king was grieved for Absalom, and they felt unhappy too, because they loved the king. The king did not come out to meet them, and to thank them for having fought for him, as he would have done if Absalom had not been killed; but he remained by himself, and he covered his face, and cried, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son!"

I do not wonder that David was unhappy about Absalom. Could David hope that he had gone to heaven, and that he should see him again one day? O, it is dreadful to lose a wicked child. God cut off Absalom in the midst of his wickedness. God is very angry with children who behave ill to their parents, and he often punishes them by letting them die while they are young, and sending their souls to hell.

Jonathan died while he was young, but he was good; and he went to heaven. I hope, my dear children, that none of you will die in wickedness, as Absalom did. Pray now, my darlings, to God, to make you love and obey him, and I know that he will hear you. Why

will he hear you? Because Jesus died for you.

Young Absalom's beautiful hair
Is caught in the boughs of a tree.
The prince is suspended in air,
And struggles in vain to get free.

Three arrows are struck through his heart,
He dies in his youth's freshest bloom.
O that all from his sins might depart,
Who hear of young Absalom's doom!

I wonder not David should weep
O'er a son in his sins snatched away;
O well might his anguish be deep,
As he thought of the great judgment-day.

CHILD.

Dear Saviour, thou seest my heart
With pride and with vanity filled;
In mercy thy Spirit impart,
And make me a dutiful child.

Then weep not, dear parents, for me,
If I in my childhood should die;
Believe that my face you would see
Among the redeemed on high.

LESSON XVIII.

DAVID, OR THE FAREWELL.

2 SAMUEL, 19; 1 KINGS, 2: 38, 39; 1 CHRON. 28; 29.

DID not Absalom come to a very dreadful end? He died in the midst of his wickedness; for God curses children who behave ungratefully to their parents. How much David loved this wicked Absalom. He went on crying for him for some time. David knew why God had let him have such a wicked child. Do you know why? It was because David had killed Uriah. Yet God had forgiven David.

Now Absalom was dead, David could return to Jerusalem. The people who had said that Absalom was king, now wished David to be king again. So David went over the river Jordan, on his way back to Jerusalem. As he was on the other side of the river, a man came to David, and threw himself down before him to ask his pardon. Who could this man be? It was the wicked man who had thrown stones and dust at David, when he was unhappy.

Did David forgive him? Yes, he did. Was not that kind in David? The man deserved to die, but David said to him, Thou shalt not die. The man was not really sorry; only he did not dare to behave ill to David, now he was king again. God would punish that wicked man, though David forgave him. I hope, dear children, that you will forgive people who behave rudely to you; God has said that if we do not forgive, he will not forgive us.

There was another man who came to see David, before he crossed over the river. It was one of those rich men who had been kind to David in his distress, and who had sent him the presents of beds, basins, and food. He was an old man, and David thanked him, and asked him to come and live with him at Jerusalem. The rich man said he was too old, but that he would like to have David take his son with him to Jerusalem; and David did take his son with him, and he kissed the old man, and blessed him. David was grateful: he was kind to people who had been kind to him.

David was very glad to come back to Jerusalem. Do you know what made him most

glad? It was because he wished to worship God near his ark, and to hear all the people praising God. While David had been a great way from Jerusalem, he often sighed and wept to think that he could not go to the house of the Lord; for David loved God very much. David was pleased to see the priests offer sacrifices on the altar to God, and to praise God himself for his goodness, upon the harp.

You remember the kind promises that God had made to David. He had promised that David should have one good son, who should be king after David was dead, and who should build a house for the Lord.

One of David's sons was good. God loved him, and made him good. His name was Solomon. God told David that he was to be king after him. At last David grew very old, and weak, and he knew that he should die. So he wished to make Solomon king before he died. He told the high-priest to pour oil upon his head; and so the high-priest anointed Solomon to be king.

Then David called his people together to a place in Jerusalem, that he might speak to them all before he died. When they had all

come, the king stood up on his feet, and said, I once wished to build a house for the ark of God; but God would not let me build a house, because I had shed so much blood in battle, but he said that my son should build it.

Then David spoke to Solomon, and said, Solomon, my son, serve God, and he will bless you. Then David showed Solomon the things he had got ready for building the house: gold, and silver, and iron, and stones, and wood; and David asked the people whether they would give any of their things to build a house for God.

And the people gave a great many things: gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, and beautiful shining stones; and the people liked to give their things for God's house.

And David was pleased to see that they liked to give; for that was a sign that they loved God.

Dear children, if you love God, you will like to spare your money, to help poor people, and to buy Bibles, and to build churches, and to send ministers to the heathen.

I shall tell you no more about David. I know that you love him very much. He had

loved God since he was a child and kept sheep. How pleasant it is to love God all our lives long. This is what I wish you to do, my dear children. I want you to love God now, while you are young, and to go on loving him when you are grown up, if you live; and to love him when your hair is grey. David began to sing God's praises when he was a shepherd-boy; and he went on praising him till he died. God was kind to David all his days. And he will be kind to you, dear children, even when you are old and grey-headed; and he will take you to that sweet place where David is now, and where Christ is.

Then David prayed to God, and thanked him for letting Solomon build him a house, and for letting the people give their things to God. And David asked God to make Solomon love him, and obey him. David offered a great many sacrifices to God.

Very soon David died. Where did his spirit go? To the God he loved. He had sung many sweet songs to him while he lived on the earth, but now he sings sweeter songs.

David was called, "The sweet Psalmist of Israel." Why was that name given to him?

LESSON XIX.

SOLOMON, OR THE WISE CHOICE.

2 CHRON. 1: 1-6; 1 KINGS, 3: 3, TO THE END.

ALMOST the first thing that Solomon did when he was made king, was to offer sacrifices to God.

Was not that right?

He did not offer these sacrifices on mount Zion, where the ark was, but he went to the place where the old tabernacle was, that Moses had made, and where the great brass altar was, and there he offered a great many sacrifices to God. Why did he offer these sacrifices? To show that he loved God and wished to serve him.

The night after Solomon had offered the sacrifices, God spoke to Solomon while he was asleep, and said, Ask what I shall give thee. You see God allowed Solomon to choose what he would like to have God give him.

Do you wish to know what Solomon chose to have? What would you have asked for?

Now Solomon had just been made king, and he saw what a hard thing it was to be a good

king; for Solomon would judge the people: people who quarrelled with each other would come to Solomon; and it is very hard, when people quarrel, to find out who is in fault, and who ought to be punished.

Solomon wished very much to judge the people well; and so he asked God to make him very wise.

Solomon said to God that night, Thou hast made me king over a great many people, and I am very young; and I do not know what I ought to do. O make me very wise, that I may judge the people well.

Did Solomon make a wise choice? O yes; it was right in Solomon to wish to judge the people well.

God was very much pleased with Solomon, and said, You did not ask me to make you very rich, or make you live a long while, or make you conquer your enemies, but you asked for wisdom; therefore I will make you wiser than any man that ever lived; and I will make you very rich too; so that no other king shall be as rich, or as great as you; and if you love me, and serve me as David did, I will make you live a long while.

Then Solomon woke. How pleased he must have been to think of the promises that God had made him. He went back to Jerusalem, and offered up more sacrifices, near the ark on mount Zion.

Now I will tell you of something that happened, which showed that God had made Solomon as wise as he said he would.

One day there came two women to Solomon. They had quarrelled with each other. Solomon was the judge, and the women stood before him.

One of these women held a dead babe in her arms, and the other held a living babe in her arms. Both the babes were very little creatures, only a few days old, so that the living babe was not old enough to sit up, or to look about it, or to smile.

The woman who held the dead babe seemed very unhappy, and she said to the king, 'This dead babe is not my own child. The other babe is mine. I lived in the same house with that woman, and no one lived in the house besides us two; and one night that woman lay upon her child in bed, and killed it; and so she got up, and put her dead babe into my

bed while I was asleep, and took my living babe into hers. When I woke in the morning, I was going to feed my child, but I found only this dead child; but when I had looked at it, I saw it was not my own child.

Then the other woman said, You do not speak truth; the living child is mine, and the dead one is yours. Then the other woman said again, No, the living child is mine, and the dead is yours.

Which of these women spoke the truth? And which of them told lies? How could Solomon find out? How could he tell which ought to have the living babe?

But God had made Solomon very wise, and he thought of a way to find out who spoke the truth.

Solomon called out, Bring me a sword. And the servants brought a sword to the king. Then Solomon said, Cut the living child in two, and give half to one woman, and half to the other; because both the women say the child is theirs, so let them each have half.

Then one of the women cried out, O do not cut the child in two, but let that woman have it; only do not kill it.

But the other woman said, Let the child be cut in two, and let us each have half.

Now which do you think was the mother of the living child? Oh, I see that you know. Was it not the one who said, Do not let it be killed?

How do you know that she was the mother? Because she loved the babe so much. Mothers do love their babes very much; they would rather that any one should have their babes, than that the babes should be killed.

Solomon knew which was the mother, and he said to his servant, Give her the living child, and do not kill it; she is the mother of it.

Why had Solomon desired the man at first to cut the babe in two? Had he intended to have it killed? O no. He only wanted to see what the women would say, that he might find out which was the mother. Was not that a wise plan of Solomon's? God had really made him wise as he had promised he would.

All the Israelites heard of what the king had said to the women, and they were surprised at his wisdom, and they were afraid of him, for they saw that God had put wisdom into his heart.

Should you like to be wise, my dear children? You go to school to learn to be wise, that you may know what is right, and what is wrong; but you will never be as wise as Solomon, for God has said that no one shall be as wise as he was. But there is one thing still better than Solomon's kind of wisdom, and you may have it if you ask God for it. Do you ask, What is that? It is the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit is in your heart, you will know God, and you will love him. God has promised to give his Spirit. He has said, Ask, and ye shall receive. I am glad when you are wise enough to answer questions right, or to behave well; but I wish most that you should love God with all your heart, and try to please him. That is a better kind of wisdom than Solomon's.

Now, if the Lord should say to me,
"What gifts shall I bestow on thee?"
Should I like Solomon reply,
"O give me wisdom from on high?"

Yet wisdom is the only thing
That real happiness can bring;
And restless must my heart remain,
Until this wisdom I obtain.

It would not make me truly wise
To know the stars that fill the skies,
Or all the fishes in the seas,
Or beasts and birds, or flowers and trees.

Wisdom to love the thing that's right,
O this would give my heart delight.
This wisdom, then, O grant to me,
That I may ever live with thee.

LESSON XX.

SOLOMON, OR THE TEMPLE.

1 KINGS, 5: 15-17; 2 CHRON. 3; 4; 5; 6; 7: 1-12.

Do you remember what God had said that Solomon should build ?

A house for the Lord.

This house was to be called a Temple ; and it was to be very beautiful.

Solomon had a great many things to build it of: gold, and silver, and iron, and brass, and stones, and wood ; and he had a great many servants to build it. David his father had told him how to build it. How did David know how to build it ? God had told David, and he had written it down.

Solomon did not build the temple upon mount Zion, but upon another high hill in Jerusalem.

Solomon ordered a great many large stones to be laid upon the ground for the beginning of the house ; then he directed his servants to cut down a great many trees, and he had some more wood which David had given to him. Solomon built the walls and the roof of

wood, and Solomon covered the inside of the house with gold.

How beautiful the house must have been inside. How bright it must have shone when the candlesticks were lighted; for Solomon made ten candlesticks of gold, to give light to the house. Solomon put other beautiful things in the temple, besides the ten candlesticks. He put ten tables for bread, and a golden altar to burn sweet spices in the midst. And Solomon made a court round the temple, with a stone wall round the court; and he put in the court ten large basins of brass, to wash the animals in before they were sacrificed; and he made one basin larger than the rest: and he made twelve oxen of brass, and put this large basin on the backs of the oxen; and he had the basin filled with water for the priests to wash in.

In the court Solomon placed a very large brass altar that he had made. It was so large that a great many lambs, and bullocks, and goats might be burned on it at the same time.

At last the temple was quite finished, and it was the most beautiful house in the world.

It could not be moved about, as the tabernacle had been in the wilderness ; but Solomon never wished to move it from Jerusalem. It was a great deal larger than the tabernacle.

When it was finished, Solomon sent for all the people to come to the temple. The priests came, and they carried the ark into a little room in the temple, called the Holy of Holies ; and Solomon had made a great door to the little room ; and he had placed a great curtain or veil over the door, and he had made two very large cherubim, or angels, of wood covered with gold, and had placed them in the little room, besides the two golden cherubim that were on the top of the ark. The large cherubim stood upright, and each had two great wings stretched out all across the little room. The priests left the ark under the wings of the great cherubim, and no one could see into the little room because of the great door, and of the curtain or veil which was over the door.

The other part of the temple was filled with priests, and with singers all clothed in white and holding harps and other kinds of musical instruments in their hands—and some of the

priests blew trumpets. These were the words the singers sung :

“O give thanks unto the Lord ; for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.”

As soon as the priests had left the ark in the little room, and while the priests and singers were praising the Lord in the temple, the Lord himself came down in a cloud, and filled the temple ; so that the priests and singers were obliged to go out of the temple, and to stand in the court.

How glad Solomon was to see that the Lord had come into the house that he had built for him. Solomon liked to see the brightness of the Lord, though he knew that the Lord filled every place.

Where did king Solomon stand ? He had made a high place of brass, and he put it near the brass altar in the court, and he stood upon this high place, so that all the people could see him.

And Solomon knelt down on this place, and spread wide his arms, and began to pray to God. His prayer was very long ; but I will only tell you a small part of it. He asked God to hear all people who were unhappy,

and who were sorry for their sins, and to forgive them.

When Solomon had ended his prayer, there came down fire from heaven, and burned up the beasts that had been killed and spread upon the altar. The fire did not hurt the people; it only burned the dead beasts on the altar. God sent the fire to show the people that he wished them to offer sacrifices to him and pray to him.

When the people saw the fire, and the glory of God all over the temple, they bowed themselves down to the ground, and praised the Lord, and said, He is good; his mercy endureth for ever.

At last the people went home to their own houses, but they very often came to offer sacrifices at the temple, and to pray to God. Sweet psalms and sweet music might be heard at the temple both night and day.

That temple was a delightful place; because there people praised God, and because there they saw his glory.

There is a sweeter place, where I hope we shall go some day. There God shines brighter than the sun, and there angels clothed in

white are always singing his praises. Do you wish to go there, my dear children? Then what must you do? You must pray to God for two things: to forgive you your sins, and to give you his Holy Spirit. Why will God hear your prayers? Because Jesus died on the cross; God promised his Son, that he would hear people's prayers. God cannot break his promise. My dear little child, say to God, O keep thy promise to thy Son: forgive me for his sake: Give me his Holy Spirit.

LESSON XXI.

SOLOMON, OR THE QUEEN'S VISIT

2 CHRON. 7: 11, TO THE END; 1 KINGS, 10.

You remember how God once spoke to Solomon in the night, and how he let him choose what he would have.

A long while afterwards, God spoke to Solomon again in the night.

God said to Solomon, I have heard your prayer to me in the temple, and if you obey me as David did, I will bless you; but if you do wicked things, and worship idols, then I shall be very angry, and this beautiful house that you have built shall be thrown down.

Ah, my dear child, do you not hope to find that Solomon obeyed God? How kind God had been to him. Had he not given him all the things he had promised?

Solomon was very rich and very wise, as God had promised. He built a great many ships, and he built a palace, and he built a great many towns; and he made a great throne with six steps all covered with gold, and images of two lions on each of the steps,

a lion on each side, and a seat at the top for Solomon.

When Solomon spoke, he said such wise things that people came from a great way off to hear him talk, and they brought him presents; some brought cups of gold or silver, and some brought him clothes, and some brought spices, and some brought horses and mules.

So Solomon grew very rich indeed. He sent his ships to far countries over the sea, and they came back full of gold, and silver, and ivory, and apes, and peacocks. Solomon was the richest king in the world.

I told you that people came from far countries to hear him say wise things; for Solomon knew a great deal: he knew about all the plants, from the highest tree down to the least plant that grows; he knew about the beasts, and birds, and fishes, and worms, and insects; but he knew something much better than these things, he knew about God and how to please him, and he gave people very wise advice.

Now there was a queen who lived a great way off, who heard of Solomon, and how wise he was; and she wished very much to hear

him talk, and to see the house that he had built.

She had a great many questions to ask him: I believe that her questions were about God. She had not been taught about God in her own country, and she wanted to know a great deal about him. She was called the queen of Sheba. It was right in the queen of Sheba to wish to know about God. She was a very rich lady, so she brought a great many servants with her, and a great many camels with spices and gold, as presents to king Solomon.

Solomon was very kind to her, and answered all the questions that she asked him; and he showed her all the things that he had built. The queen was quite surprised at all she saw and heard, and she said to king Solomon, How happy are your servants who are always standing near you, and who hear the wise things you say. Blessed be the Lord your God, who made you king.

Then she gave a great deal of gold and silver to king Solomon, and he gave her all the things that she desired; and then the queen went back with her camels and her servants into her own country.

The queen of Sheba brought back to her own home something better than her presents; she brought a great deal of wisdom in her mind. For could not she remember the wise things that Solomon had said? I hope that she left off worshipping idols, and loved the true God.

A great many of the wise things that Solomon said, are written down in the Bible; they are called "The Proverbs." When you are older, my dear children, you shall read them, that you may grow wise. I think even now you would understand some of them.

I think that the queen of Sheba would think you very happy children, if she could see you. Are not you happier than Solomon's servants? You can read the wise things that Solomon said, and a great many wiser things that Jesus Christ said. They are written down in the Bible.

Across the burning plains of sand
Came Sheba's queen to Canaan's land,
To hear king Solomon;
And when she heard his wisdom rare,
She cried, "How blest the servants are,
That stand around thy throne."

And did she count those servants blest ?
More happy we, who are possessed
Of God's most holy word ;
For we can read what Jesus said,
And how God raised him from the dead
To be our living God.

But O, how will our hearts rejoice,
When we shall hear our Saviour's voice,
And see him face to face ;
For then much better shall we know,
Than we have ever known below,
The wonders of his grace.

LESSON XXII.

SOLOMON, OR THE IDOLS.

1 KINGS, 11 : 1-13.

How many times had God appeared to Solomon? Twice.

The first time God promised to make Solomon wise; and the next time God promised to bless him, if he served him.

But did Solomon serve God? I must now tell you of the wicked things that he did, when he was old.

He married a great many wives. This was wrong. People might then have two wives, or a few wives; but God liked best that they should only have one. You remember that Jacob had two wives, named Rachel and Leah. If a man *now* was to have two wives, he would be punished; *then* he might have two wives, but not so many as Solomon had.

Solomon had seven hundred wives. Why did he have so many? I think that Solomon had grown proud, and that he wished to be a very grand king, and it was thought very grand for a king to have many wives.

These wives were wicked: they worshipped

idols. Solomon ought not to have married heathen women. At last these wives persuaded Solomon to like their idols, and to build altars for the idols on the high places round Jerusalem; and Solomon did even worse than this, he worshipped some of the idols himself. You did not think that he could have been so wicked. Was he not very foolish to worship idols, which are only made of wood, or stone? Solomon knew what was right, but he did not do it.

How sad it must have been to see these women offering sacrifices, and burning incense to their idols, and Solomon bowing down to them. God was very angry with Solomon; and God said to him, Because you have done this, one of your servants shall make himself king; he shall take away a great deal of the land of Canaan from your son, as soon as you are dead.

I believe Solomon was sorry for his wickedness before he died; but I am not quite sure that he was. It must have made him very sorry to know that God would punish him. I hope he was sorry for having displeased God, who had been so very kind to him.

Do you know it is the rule that when a king dies, the king's son is king instead of his father? So, when Solomon died, his son was king instead of him; but very soon one of Solomon's servants tried to make himself king. The servant's name was Jer-o-bo-am. This servant made himself the king over a great part of the land of Canaan; but Solomon's son was still king over the rest of the land.

What God had said came true; for God makes all he says come true. God had told Solomon that his son should only have part of the land. This was the punishment that God gave Solomon. God will punish people who are disobedient.

I hope, my dear child, that you will not be like king Solomon, and love God only when you are young; but I hope that you will love God all your life, from the time you are a little creature, until your hair is grey, and your back is bent with age, should you live to be old.

O who is this with kingly crown
Before an idol bowing down?
Can it be he whose early days
Were spent in wisdom's pleasant ways;

Who built to God a temple fair,
And lifted up his voice in prayer ?

Alas, 'tis he ; a beauteous train
Of heathen women, bold and vain,
Have stolen his heart from God away ;
And now that he is old and grey,
To please the wives he fondly loves,
He worships idols in the groves.

CHILD.

From Solomon I'll warning take,
And I will never friendship make
With those who love ungodly mirth,
And only care for things of earth,
Lest they should make my heart to rove
From Him who won my early love.

LESSON XXIII.

JEROBOAM, OR THE DRIED-UP HAND.

1 KINGS, 12: 25 TO THE END; 13: 1-7, 33, 34.

You have heard, my dear children, how Solomon's servant Jeroboam made himself king over part of Canaan; but Solomon's son was king over the other part of Canaan. Now Jerusalem was not in Jeroboam's part of Canaan; it was in the part that Solomon's son was king over. It was a good thing for Solomon's son that he had Jerusalem. You can tell me why it was a good thing: The temple was in Jerusalem; and in the temple, God came down in a glorious cloud.

You know that God had desired all the people in Canaan to come to Jerusalem very often to worship him. Jeroboam ought to have come to Jerusalem to worship God; but he would not. He was very wicked, and he told his people not to go to Jerusalem.

Why did he not like to go there? Because there was another king in Jerusalem. He did not wish his people to go to a place where there was another king, lest they should like

the other king best. You see how proud Jeroboam was. Then Jeroboam did a very wicked thing: he made two golden calves, and set them up in his part of Canaan, one calf in one town, and the other calf in another town. Why did he set up the calves? That people might worship them instead of God. He told his people to worship them. He said, Do not go to Jerusalem, it is too far off; worship these golden calves. How wicked it was in Jeroboam to teach his people to worship idols. It is very wicked to teach other people to do wrong. Remember this, dear children. Never advise your playfellows to do wrong. God will be very angry with you if you do, and you will be like the devil, for he tempts people to sin against God.

Jeroboam worshipped the calves himself. One day God sent a prophet to him to tell him of his wickedness. Jeroboam was standing by an altar burning incense to a golden calf, when the prophet came, and told him how angry God was with the people who worshipped the golden calves, and how he would punish them. And the prophet said, And this is the sign that God is angry; the altar shall be broken,

and the ashes that are on it shall fall to the ground.

When king Jeroboam heard this he was angry, and he wished to punish the prophet; so he stretched out his hand; and said to his servants, Lay hold on him. Now while Jeroboam's hand was stretched out, God made it grow dry and stiff, so that he could not pull it back again; and at the same time the altar was broken, and the ashes fell upon the ground, as the prophet had said.

Do you not think Jeroboam must have been frightened then? He knew that no one could make his hand well but God; so he said to the prophet, Pray thou to the Lord thy God for me, that my hand may be made well.

Would the prophet pray to God for Jeroboam, who had been so unkind to him? Yes, he would; he prayed to God, and God made the king's hand as well as it was before.

Then Jeroboam did not try to hurt the prophet any more, because he was afraid to hurt him; but Jeroboam did not repent of worshipping idols and turn to God, but he went on teaching his people to pray to the

golden calves. And God was very angry with Jeroboam.

Why was not Jeroboam afraid of God? He saw that God could dry up his arm; could he not kill him, and cast him into hell? Ah, dear children, we ought to fear to offend our great God. Have you never stretched out your arm to do something naughty? Perhaps to fight? God could have dried up your arm. He is very kind. But he will punish us one day, if we do not love him, or care for him.

LESSON XXIV.

ELIJAH, OR THE RAVENS.

1 KINGS, 16:29-34; 17:1-7.

You remember, dear children, that Jeroboam was king over only part of the land of Canaan. Solomon had been king over all the land; but now Solomon's son was king over one part, and Jeroboam was king over the other part.

I will tell you what Jeroboam was called. He was called king of Israel; and Solomon's son was called king of Judah. Will you try to remember this?

At last Jeroboam died, and there was another king of Israel instead of him; and at last that king died, and then there was another king; and at last he died, and then there was another king; so there were a great many kings one after the other. I am sorry to say that they were all wicked, and that they all worshipped the golden calves that Jeroboam had made. I will not tell you the names of these kings; and my reason is, I am afraid that you will not remember the names of so many. But I will tell you the name of one of them.

At last, after a great many kings had died, one after another, there was a king called Ahab.

He was more wicked than any of the other kings had been. One of the worst things he did, was to marry a wicked woman who worshipped idols. This woman was the daughter of the king of another country; she had been brought up to worship idols, and she was very fond of idols, and she did a great many wicked things. This woman's name was Jezebel. She was called the queen of Israel, because she was married to Ahab king of Israel.

The name of Jezebel's favorite idol was Baal; and she persuaded Ahab to worship Baal, as well as the golden calves: and Ahab built a temple for Baal in the town where he lived. There were a great many men who used to teach people to worship Baal, and these men were called the prophets of Baal; and Jezebel was very kind to them. For Jezebel was kind to people who loved idols; but she tried to kill the people who loved God. There were some people in the land of Israel who would not worship Baal; and these people hid themselves in caves, lest Jezebel should kill them.

God loved these good people very much.

I will now tell you of one very good prophet that lived in the land of Israel. His name was Elijah: he would not worship idols, and he tried to persuade other people to love the true God. God often spoke to him, and told him what would happen, and Elijah prayed very often to God.

Ahab and Jezebel hated Elijah because he was good, and they would have liked to kill him. Elijah was very sorry to see so many people in the land of Israel worshipping Baal; and he wished very much that they should be sorry for their wickedness. At last God sent the people a punishment.

God did not send any rain for a great many months, nor did he let any dew come on the grass in the morning; so the hot sun scorched the grass, and the corn did not grow, and the trees did not bring forth fruit. All the people of Israel were very unhappy; but God wished them to turn from their wickedness.

How did Elijah get food when there was no rain? God told him to go to a place where there was a brook, in a secret place, where he might hide himself from Ahab; and God promised to send some ravens to feed him.

So Elijah went to this brook, and he drank of the water of the brook; and in the morning some ravens flew to him, and brought him some bread and meat; and in the evening they came again, and brought him some more bread and meat; and the next day they came again, both morning and evening; so Elijah had breakfast and supper every day, and he wanted nothing more.

Who made the birds so wise and so kind? God can do every thing. Most ravens are wild, but God made these ravens gentle. How glad Elijah must have been when he saw them coming with the food. How he must have thanked God for sending them every day. God has promised to feed all hungry people who pray to him. God does not send ravens to feed them; but he makes other people pity them and give them food.

Elijah lived quite alone by the brook; but Elijah knew that God was with him. After a while there was very little water in the brook; the sun dried up the water, and no rain came to fill it up. At last there was none left.

What could Elijah do now? God could have filled the brook with water, but he did

not choose to do that. He told Elijah to leave the brook, and to go to another place.

You see what care God took of Elijah; he will take the same care of you, if you love him and pray to him.

Elijah by the brook abides,
And there from furious Ahab hides,
And every human eye;
And while he drinks the waters clear,
To bring him food with faithful care,
His wingèd servants fly.

'Tis God that gives the ravens meat,
And to the prophet's lone retreat
Points out the secret way:
The waters sink below the brim,
But still Elijah trusts to Him
Who feeds him day by day.

For should the little brook be dry,
Yet God would all his wants supply,
While here he dwelt below;
And then the Lamb his soul would feed,
And through eternal ages lead
Where living waters flow.

CHILD.

To bring me food no ravens fly,
Yet parents all my wants supply
With watchful tenderness;
And should they soon be breathless clay,
My God would find some other way
To keep me from distress.

LESSON XXV.

ELIJAH, OR THE WIDOW.

1 KINGS, 17:8, TO THE END.

WHERE did God tell Elijah to go, when the brook was dried up? He told him to go a great way off to a place where a poor widow lived, who would give him food. You know that a widow is a woman who has lost her husband. Widows are generally poor, because they have no husbands to work for them; but this widow was very poor indeed, because, since there had been no rain, people could get very little food to eat, because so little corn grew in the fields.

But Elijah went where God told him. He went all across the land of Canaan, till he came to a town just outside Canaan. Now the people who lived in this town were heathen people, and worshipped idols.

When Elijah came to the gate of the town, he saw a poor woman gathering sticks, and Elijah knew that she was the widow who was to give him food; and Elijah called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a little water in a cup, that I may drink.

I do not wonder that Elijah was thirsty; for he had walked a long way, and there was now very little water in the land of Canaan.

Now this widow was so kind, that she was going to fetch the water for Elijah. Then Elijah called to her again, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

Then the poor widow said, I have not got any bread; I have only a handful of flour in a barrel, and a little oil in a jar, and I was just gathering some sticks that I might make a fire, and make the flour and oil into a little cake, that I and my son may eat it; and as we have no more food, when we have eaten it we must die.

Would Elijah take all the poor widow's food? God had told Elijah what to say.

Elijah said to the widow, Go and make a little cake for me first, and afterwards make one for you and your son; for God has said, that there shall always be some flour in your barrel, and some oil in your jar, till he sends rain again upon the earth.

What a wonderful promise this was. Did the widow believe it? Yes, she did. She went and made a fire, and mixed the flour and

oil together, and made some bread for Elijah, and then she made some for herself and her son; and still there was flour in the barrel, and oil in the jar; and every day she found enough flour and oil to make bread for them all.

Elijah came, and lived with this poor widow; he lived in a room up stairs in her house. This widow found it was a good thing to have such a man as Elijah in the house. Why was it such a good thing? Because God made the flour and oil last. Besides this, Elijah could teach this poor woman about God; for you know that she had been brought up to worship idols.

Elijah loved God, and wished all people to love him.

Now you shall hear of a very sad thing that happened to this poor woman. One day her son, who was a little boy, fell sick, and he was so very sick that he died, and there was no breath left in him. The poor widow was very unhappy. She knew that God had let him die, and she thought that God was angry with her; and she wished that Elijah had not come to her house; and she went to Elijah,

and spoke angrily to him. It was very ungrateful in her to behave in this manner. Then Elijah said, Give me thy son.

Now the widow was holding the dead child in her arms, and Elijah took the child in his own arms, and carried him to his own room, and laid him on his bed. Then Elijah began to pray to God. O Lord my God, he said, hast thou made this sad thing happen to the widow I live with? Hast thou killed her son?

Then Elijah stretched himself upon the child, as it lay dead; he did so three times, and he prayed to God, saying, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

And the Lord heard Elijah's prayer; and he let the child's soul come into him again, and then the child was alive again. Then it was warm, and it breathed. O how glad Elijah must have been. How kind it was in God to hear Elijah's prayer. God let the poor widow know that Elijah's God was the true God, and could make people alive. Elijah took the child in his arms, and brought him down stairs, and gave him to his mother again, and said to her, See, thy son is alive. Was

she angry now with Elijah? O no. Now, said she, I see that you are a man of God, and all that you tell me about God is true.

Now I hope the widow believed all that Elijah said, and I hope she loved the God who had been so very kind to her, and given her food, and made her child alive again.

God still hears people when they pray, but he does not always make children alive again; but he will make you alive again, dear child, when the last trumpet sounds, if you love him. Some day your body will lie in the ground, and then I hope your soul will be with God; and when Christ comes in the clouds, and the trumpet sounds, then your body will rise from the grave, and your soul and body will be joined together again. O what a happy day that will be to those who love God.

LESSON XXVI.

ELIJAH, OR THE TWO ALTARS.

1 KINGS, 18: 1-40.

ELIJAH lived a long time with the poor widow. Ahab and Jezebel the wicked king and queen did not know where he was hid. They would have been glad to find him, that they might kill him. Ahab sent to all the countries round to look for him; but no one could find him. Why was king Ahab angry with Elijah? Because Elijah had told Ahab that God was angry with him for worshipping idols. You know that wicked people once hated Jesus, because he told them of their sins.

The Israelites were very unhappy because they had very little food; even king Ahab had not grass enough in his fields for his horses, so that a great many of them died.

Elijah was sorry for the poor Israelites, and he prayed to God to send rain, that more corn and grass might grow. God heard this prayer, and he told Elijah that he would soon send rain; but first he told Elijah to go and show himself to king Ahab.

Do you not think that Elijah would be afraid to go to king Ahab? But Elijah did what God told him; for he knew that God could take care of him. So Elijah left the poor widow and her son, and set out on a long journey to the place where Ahab lived. I think that the widow must have been sorry when Elijah went, for he had fed her and taught her about God; but God had promised to make her flour and oil last till he sent rain, and the rain had not yet come.

Now while Elijah was on his way to king Ahab, he met a very good servant of Ahab's.

This servant was looking for some grass for king Ahab's horses. The servant knew Elijah when he saw him; and he was very much surprised, for it was a long while since any one in Canaan had seen Elijah. This good servant fell on his face before Elijah, and said, Art thou my lord Elijah?

Then Elijah said, I am: go and tell your lord, king Ahab, that I am here.

Then the servant was afraid, for he thought that while he was gone to tell Ahab where Elijah was, that God would take away Elijah to some other place, and then that Ahab would

be angry with his servant and kill him. Ahab was a cruel master, and his servant was afraid of making him angry.

But Elijah promised that he would stay in that place till king Ahab came ; so the servant believed Elijah's promise, and he went to look for king Ahab.

Ahab was in another place, looking for grass for his horses. His good servant told him that Elijah was waiting to see him. So Ahab came to the place.

When Ahab saw Elijah, he spoke angrily to him, and said, Are you the man that troubles the people of Israel ?

Ahab thought it was Elijah who had asked God not to let the rain come.

Then Elijah said to Ahab, It is not I that trouble the people of Israel ; it is you that have made these troubles come by your wickedness. You have not obeyed God, and you have worshipped Baal.

Then Elijah told Ahab what he wanted him to do. He told him to get all the prophets of Baal together, and send them to him to a very high hill or mountain.

Would Ahab do what Elijah asked him ?

Yes, he would, because he wanted rain, and he thought that Elijah could ask God to send it. I think that Ahab was afraid of killing Elijah, lest God should send no rain.

One morning very early Elijah was on the high mountain with Baal's wicked prophets, and a great many people were standing all round; and king Ahab was there, but Jezebel was not there.

What could Elijah have to say to the people?

He wanted them to see that his God was the true God; so Elijah said to them, Let Baal's prophets take a bullock and kill it, and lay it on an altar, and then let them ask Baal to send fire from heaven to burn up the bullock. I will take another bullock and kill it, and lay it on an altar, and I will ask the Lord to send fire from heaven: and if Baal send fire, then you will know that he is the true God; but if my God send fire, then you will know that he is the true God.

The people liked what Elijah said, and they answered, It is well spoken.

Then Elijah told Baal's prophets to take their bullock first. So they took it and killed

it, and put it on the altar with some wood; but they put no fire to the wood. Then they began to pray to their god to send fire. They cried, O Baal, hear us. They went on calling out, O Baal, hear us, till twelve o'clock; and they jumped about the altar, as they used to do when they prayed to him.

How tired they must have been, after calling out so long, O Baal, hear us.

At last Elijah said to them, Cry louder. Perhaps your God is talking, or perhaps he is hunting, or perhaps he is taking a journey, or perhaps he is asleep, and you must awake him.

Was Elijah speaking in earnest? O no; he knew that Baal was nothing at all: only those foolish people said that there was a god called Baal, and made images that they said were like him.

Still, the prophets of Baal went on praying for fire; and at last they cut themselves with knives, and made their blood flow, because they thought it would please Baal: they thought he was a cruel god that liked their blood. So they went on till three o'clock in the afternoon; but no fire came from heaven.

Then Elijah said it was time to ask his God to send fire: so Elijah built an altar with twelve stones, and he laid some wood on the altar, and he laid a bullock on the wood; and then he desired the people to throw twelve barrels of water over the altar. There was a river just at the bottom of the hill, where people could get the water: Elijah made a ditch all round the altar, and this ditch was quite filled with water, and the altar was quite wet.

Why did Elijah wish the water to be poured over the sacrifice? To show the people that he had not hid any fire in the altar, or near it; for if he had, the water would have put it out.

Then Elijah began to pray to God. All the people were standing round, while he prayed before the altar.

This is what he said: Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, [or Jacob,] let it be known this day that thou art God, and that I am thy servant. Hear me, O Lord, hear me.

Did God hear Elijah? Yes; the fire came from heaven, and burnt up the bullock and

the altar ; yes, the fire burnt the stones, and even the water that was in the ditch.

How surprised the people were at this sight They fell on their faces and said, The Lord he is the God ; the Lord he is the God.

Now they saw that Baal was not the true God. So Elijah desired the people to take hold of the wicked prophets of Baal, and to bring them down to the river at the bottom of the hill, and to kill them with swords. So the blood of these prophets was mixed with the water in the river. These prophets had taught the people to worship Baal, so God chose that they should die.

Did the people leave off worshipping Baal ? Did they mind what Elijah said, and pray to his God ? We shall soon hear what they did.

How much they wished that God would send rain. They must have felt sure that if God could send fire, he could send rain.

He sends down rain to make corn grow for us, dear children ; does he not ? O what a great God he is.

He could send fire to burn us ; but instead of that he is kind to us.

To Carmel's hill, at break of day,
Ahab the wicked king is come—
Elijah, whom he sought to slay,
And those who worship gods of stone;
While people flock from far and wide,
To see some mighty question tried.

They come to know who is the Lord,
And who can hear when prophets call,
And who by all should be adored,
Both high and low, both great and small
O why does Baal give no heed
To those who cry, and leap, and bleed?

And will the Lord again display
The wonders of his mighty power?
O yes, he hears Elijah pray,
And flakes of fire the stones devour:
The people on their faces fall,
And own that God is Lord of all.

Elijah orders in that hour
The wicked prophets to be slain,
And then entreats the Lord to pour
Rich torrents of refreshing rain:
And now let Israel fear His name,
Who sends soft showers, and dreadful flame.

CHILD.

'Tis time that I should make my choice,
And say what God I will obey.
Lord, if I listen to thy voice,
From Satan I must turn away;

All wicked ways I must forsake,
And thee for my commander take.

O Lord, I still expect a day
When fire and brimstone will descend,
And unrepenting sinners slay,
Who have not Jesus for their friend :
What other hand could save me then,
Should thou my wretched soul condemn ?

LESSON XXVII.

ELIJAH, OR THE RAIN.

1 KINGS, 18: 41-46; 19: 1-8.

You have heard, dear children, how the prophets of Baal were killed. Now Elijah knew that God would soon send rain; so he told Ahab that there would soon be rain, and that he might go, and eat and drink. So Ahab ate and drank, in some place near the high hill. But Elijah did not eat and drink. He went up to the top of the hill to pray to God. He threw himself down upon the earth, and bent down his head very low.

Elijah had a servant. You have never heard of his servant before, and I do not know who he was.

Elijah told his servant to stand up while he himself was praying, and to look a great way off over the sea, and to tell him what he saw. Do you know what Elijah wished his servant to see? What is it comes before rain, those dark things in the sky? Clouds. Elijah wanted God to send clouds in the sky, that there might be rain. The servant went up

and looked, and then said to Elijah, There is nothing. Then Elijah told him to go and look seven times. The seventh time the servant came and told Elijah, I saw a little cloud a great way off, as big as a man's hand.

Elijah knew that God had heard his prayer, and that the cloud would grow larger, and that rain would soon be poured down. So he told the servant to tell Ahab to get ready his chariot, and his horses, and to drive as fast as he could to his own house, which was a great way off; for that there would soon be a great deal of rain.

So Ahab rode in his chariot with his horses, and God made Elijah so strong that he ran faster than the horses, and he got first to the city where Ahab lived. While Ahab was driving, and Elijah was running, there were a great many clouds in the sky, and soon there was a great rain.

How glad the people were when the rain came down. It filled the dried-up ponds, and refreshed the withered grass, and softened the hard ground. Now the people knew that more corn and grass would soon grow in the fields. It was kind in God to send the rain.

Ought not the people to love God, who sent the rain, though they had been so wicked as to worship Baal?

Ought not we, dear children, to love God, who sends us rain so often, and makes the corn grow? We are sinful, and do not deserve to have rain.

When Ahab got to his own city where he lived, he found the queen Jezebel there, and he told her all that had happened: he told her how Baal did not send fire from heaven, and how God did; and he told her how Elijah had killed the prophets of Baal.

Ought not Jezebel to have said she would worship the God who sent fire from heaven? But she did not say this; she was very angry with Elijah, and she sent a man to tell him that she would kill him the next day.

I think she was afraid of Elijah, or she would have desired the man to kill him then; but perhaps she thought, if she killed Elijah, there would be no more rain.

When Elijah heard that Jezebel wished to kill him, he was afraid, and he would not stay in the city where she lived; but he went very quickly all through the land of Canaan, till he

came to a great wilderness. He did not take his servant with him, but he went there alone. In the wilderness there were trees and hills, but very few houses and people.

Elijah was quite alone in the wilderness. At last he sat down under a tree, and he prayed to God to let him die. Why was Elijah so unhappy? He was afraid that Jezebel would kill him; but he was more unhappy because Jezebel went on in her wickedness. Elijah saw that she would go on teaching people to worship idols, and he wished every body to love God. After Elijah had prayed, he lay down under the tree, and went to sleep. Soon some one touched him. Who was it? An angel. The angel said, Arise and eat.

Then Elijah looked, and saw a fire, and some bread near it, that had just been baked; and he saw a jug of water close to his head. Who could have got ready the bread and the water for Elijah? It must have been the angel. So you see that an angel was his servant. God sends his angels to wait upon people who love him. The angels like to wait upon them; they fly down quickly from heaven, when

God tells them. Yes, dear children, I hope that the angels take care of you.

Elijah ate and drank the bread and water, and then he lay down again, and slept. But soon the angel woke him again, and said, Arise and eat, for you will soon walk a great way.

So Elijah ate and drank again, and afterwards Elijah walked a great way in the wilderness; but the angel's food had made him strong, and he lived without eating and drinking for forty days. Was not that a great wonder? God can keep people alive without food, if he chooses to do so. Did he not keep the Lord Jesus alive for forty days without food?

You see how kind God was to Elijah when he was unhappy. I have often advised you to pray to God when you are unhappy, because I know that he can comfort you.

If you are sick, my little darling, pray to God; he can make you well. If you are in disgrace, pray to him; he can make you good: if you are alone, and frightened, pray to him; he can keep you safely.

LESSON XXVIII.

ELIJAH, OR THE CALL OF ELISHA.

1 KINGS, 19:9, TO THE END.

ELIJAH walked for forty days in the wilderness quite alone, till at last he came to a mountain. There he found a cave; and he went into the cave, and slept in it. While he was in the cave, God spoke to him, and asked him why he had come there.

You know, dear children, the reason why. You know that Elijah had left Canaan because of wicked Jezebel, and God knew this; but he wished Elijah to tell him why.

Then Elijah said, The people of Israel have thrown down God's altars, and killed God's prophets, and I am the only one left; and they try to kill me.

Then God told him to come out of the cave. Then Elijah came out, and stood upon the mountain. And God made a very great wind blow, that tore the mountain; then God made the mountain shake; and then God made a fire come. How dreadful it must have been to see and hear these things. But God wanted

to show Elijah how strong he was; so that Elijah might know that God could take care of him, and could punish wicked people who tried to hurt him. Then God spoke to Elijah in a very gentle voice, and when Elijah heard this voice, he covered his face with his cloak, and went and stood inside the cave.

It was kind in God to speak to Elijah in such a gentle voice. God loved Elijah, and wished to comfort him. But Elijah remembered what a great God he was; so he hid his face. The seraphim who stand round God's throne in heaven, cover their faces with their wings. Ought not all people to fear the Lord? My dear child, when you pray to God, do you remember what a great God he is? How can children be so bold, as to look about and to play at prayer-time?

God asked Elijah again why he came there, and Elijah told the Lord again, that the people were wicked, and that they wanted to kill him.

Then God told Elijah that he would soon punish the wicked people for worshipping idols; and God said that all the people did not worship Baal; and that there were a great

many in Israel who had never bowed their knees to Baal, nor kissed his image.

Elijah thought that scarcely any one loved God but himself. How glad he must have been when he heard there were many other people besides, who loved God. God knows who love him, and who do not. He counts them and remembers them.

God told Elijah to go and find a man called Elisha, and to anoint him to be a prophet.

Was not Elijah pleased that there was to be another prophet to teach people about God?

Then Elijah left the cave and went to look for Elisha. At last he came to a field where a man was ploughing. There were twenty-four oxen drawing the plough. They were harnessed two and two; and each pair had a great piece of wood over their necks, called a yoke. A man was walking by the side of the last two of the oxen. The man's name was Elisha.

Elijah came up to the man, and taking off his own cloak, threw it over the man's shoulders. Why did he throw the cloak over the man? He wished to show him that he was to come with him; and the man knew what

Elijah meant, and he left his oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, I will come with thee; only let me first go and kiss my father and mother.

It was right in Elisha to be ready to go with Elijah, because Elijah was a prophet of the Lord. I do not wonder Elisha wished to go first to take leave of his father and mother, and his friends. Dear children, would not you wish to take leave of your parents, if you were going away from them?

Elijah allowed the man to go home for a little while. When the man went home, he made a feast for all his friends. He killed two of his oxen; and he made a fire with the wood that was upon their necks, and roasted them, and then asked his friends to come and eat their flesh.

Then he left his home, and went after Elijah; and he was Elijah's servant. It was very right in him to go with Elijah. Do you think it would have been pleasant to live with Elijah? Yes, it would have been pleasant to hear Elijah talk of God, and to hear him preach and pray. But you know that wicked people hated Elijah, and so Elijah was often

obliged to hide himself. If this man had not loved God, he would have liked to stay at home with his friends better than being with Elijah. But he did love God; and God loved him, and blessed him. God loves people who do what he bids them. How pleasant it is to obey God. Being with parents and friends cannot make us so happy as knowing that we please God.

O praise the Lord, for he is good:
The ravens brought Elijah food,
When he from Ahab fled;
And then he shared the widow's cake,
And next an angel bade him wake,
And feed on heavenly bread.

Why is Elijah's soul cast down?
Ah, hear that soft, that silver tone;
It is Elijah's Lord:
He will on him bestow a friend,
Who shall his wandering steps attend,
And teach God's holy word.

CHILD.

Elijah's God is still the same;
He comforts those who fear his name,
When sunk in deepest grief.
For when they think no friend is nigh,
He looks from heaven with pitying eye,
And sends some kind relief.

LESSON XXIX.

ELIJAH, OR THE VINEYARD OF NABOTH.

- KINGS, 21; 22:34-36; 2 KINGS, 9:30-37.

I AM going to tell you of a very wicked thing that Ahab did. People who worship idols always do a great many other wicked things; but people who love God, hate lying and stealing, and all wicked things.

Ahab was very rich. He had two houses. One of his houses was in one town, and the other of his houses was in another town a good way off. Near one of these houses there was a garden full of vines. What fruit grows on the vine? Grapes. A garden of vines is called a vineyard. This vineyard was close to Ahab's house, and belonged to a man called Naboth. Ahab wished very much to have this vineyard, that he might make it into a garden for himself. So Ahab said to Naboth, If you will give me your vineyard, I will give you a better one instead, or I will give you some money for it.

But Naboth answered, No, I will not sell my vineyard; my father gave it to me, and I do not choose to sell it.

Was it wrong in Naboth not to sell his vineyard? No, it was not wrong; he might keep it if he pleased.

But Ahab was very angry, because he could not get the vineyard; and he went home to his other house, and he was so unhappy that he lay down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would not eat any bread.

How foolish Ahab was, to be unhappy about a vineyard. He had a great many beautiful things, yet he wanted more. But people who do not love God are always wanting more things, and are never satisfied.

Now Jezebel saw how unhappy Ahab seemed, and she went to him, and said, What makes you so sad? why do you not eat?

And Ahab said, I asked Naboth to sell me his vineyard, and he said, "I will not sell it."

Then Jezebel said, Are you not a king? Do not be unhappy; eat and drink: I will give you the vineyard.

How could Jezebel get the vineyard? O she had such a wicked plan in her mind—she meant to have Naboth killed! So she wrote some letters to some wicked judges who lived

near Naboth, and she told them to get some other wicked people to say that they had heard Naboth say very wicked words against God and the king; and then to order people to kill him for it.

Then Jezebel sent these wicked letters to the judges in the town where Naboth lived. And when they had read them, they did as she told them. They desired two men to say that they had heard Naboth say very wicked words against God and the king. And then the judges said that Naboth must be killed; and the people took him out of the city, and threw great stones at him till he died. Poor Naboth's blood flowed upon the ground, and the dogs licked it up. God saw the blood of Naboth: he was very angry with the wicked Jezebel, who had ordered him to be killed; and God was angry with Ahab too, because he had allowed Jezebel to write the letters.

The judges who had killed Naboth sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

Then Jezebel said to Ahab, Go, and take the vineyard of Naboth; for he is not alive, but dead.

Then Ahab went to the town where the

vineyard was, to take it for his own, and to make it into a garden.

Dear children, do you think that God will punish Ahab for this wickedness?

God spoke to Elijah, and told him what Ahab had done; and God said, Go to the vineyard where Ahab is, and tell him that dogs shall one day lick his blood.

So Elijah went to the vineyard. When Ahab saw him, he was very sorry; for he could not bear to see Elijah, because he told him of his sins; and Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?

He called Elijah his enemy. Then Elijah told him, that God had said that dogs should lick his blood, and that dogs should one day eat up Jezebel's body; and that his children should be eaten by dogs, and picked by birds after they were dead.

What a dreadful message this was! I am glad to tell you that Ahab was frightened at the message, and was very unhappy. If Ahab had not cared for what God had said, God would have been still more angry with him; but now God soon told Elijah to tell Ahab that he would not give him all the punish-

ment, so that his children should not be killed till after Ahab was dead: they would be eaten by dogs and birds some day, but not for a long while; yet dogs should lick up Ahab's blood.

It was very kind in God not to kill Ahab's children immediately; but God is very kind even to wicked people, though he casts them into hell at last.

Ahab was still wicked: he was sorry, not because he had offended God, for he did not love God, he was only sorry for the punishment. He was like Saul; he was not like David.

I will now tell you how Ahab was killed at last.

A long while afterwards, Ahab went to fight a battle against some people who lived near Canaan. Ahab went to the battle in a chariot drawn by horses. There was a man there who shot an arrow, that went into the body of king Ahab, and the blood began to run out. The driver of the chariot took Ahab back to the land of Canaan, and as Ahab was on the way home, he died in the chariot. So the chariot was brought back to Ahab's home,

full of blood, and with Ahab's dead body in it. The servants took the chariot to a pond to wash it, and the dogs licked up Ahab's blood.

You remember that God had told Elijah that dogs should lick up Ahab's blood, because Ahab had allowed Naboth to be killed.

All that God says must come true.

Ahab's body was buried in a grave; but his soul, I fear, went to hell, for he did not love God.

And what became of wicked Jezebel?

A long while afterwards she was killed too.

A captain desired her servants to throw her out of the window, and they did so; and her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses of the captain and his soldiers; and the captain trampled upon her with his horse's feet. Then he went in to dinner; and while he was at dinner, the dogs ate up Jezebel, so that there was nothing left of her but the bone of her head, which is called the skull, and the bones of her feet and hands. This was the end of that wicked woman, who had killed so many of God's good prophets, and encouraged Ahab to be wicked.

What dreadful punishments God often sends to wicked people at last!

Now, dear children, will you tell me what Ahab should have done, when Naboth said he would not sell his vineyard? Should he have gone on wishing for it, and fretting about it? No, that was very wicked; it was coveting. God has said, Thou shalt not covet. We should not wish for things that God does not permit us to have. If you see something nice or pretty in a shop, and you have not money enough to buy it, you should not go on wishing for it. If there is nice fruit in your father's garden, you should not go and look at it, and wish for it; but you should turn away. If your father pleases, he will give you some. If your mother puts some cake in the cupboard, you ought not to think to yourself, How much I wish I could have some of that cake; for if you do so, perhaps you will try and take some. Satan wishes you to covet things. How should you prevent yourself wishing for things? You should pray to God to take the thoughts out of your mind, and to make you think of heavenly things. Instead of thinking so much of cake, and fruit, and toys, and pretty clothes, God's Spirit would make you think, How pleasant it will be to see the angels, and to sing

God's praises to a golden harp, and to see the dear Lord Jesus on his throne of glory.

King Ahab has a palace grand,
Fair gardens all around are spread,
Yet now he longs for Naboth's land,
And mourning lies upon his bed.

Ah, see where murdered Naboth bleeds,
While hungry dogs the spot surround;
The Lord abhors vile Ahab's deeds,
And Ahab's blood shall stain the ground.

What pleasure now can Ahab find,
In that sad spot where Naboth bled?
Does not the place recall to mind
The dreadful words the Lord has said?

Satan tries ever to deceive
The souls he wishes to destroy:
He first persuades them to believe
Some earthly thing will give true joy;

Then leads them down some crooked path,
By which that pleasure to attain;
But when they taste God's dreadful wrath,
He laughs, and triumphs in their pain.

LESSON XXX.

ELIJAH, OR THE THREE CAPTAINS.

2 KINGS, 1.

WHEN Ahab was dead, there was another king. He was one of Ahab's sons, and his name was A-ha-zi-ah. He was wicked like his father Ahab, and his mother Jezebel. He worshipped idols.

After he had been king a little while, he met with a dreadful accident. He was in a room up stairs, and he fell out of the window, and hurt himself very much. He thought that perhaps he should die, and he wanted very much to know whether he should die, or whether he should get well. When you are sick, my dear child, who is it knows whether you shall get well? Only God. But Ahab's son was so foolish that he thought an idol could tell whether he should die or live. So he sent his servants a great way off, to an idol that he had heard of.

As the servants were going to the idol, they met a man; they did not know who he was. This man was dressed in the skins of beasts

with the hair outside, and he wore round his waist a piece of leather called a girdle. Do you know, dear children, who this man was? It was Elijah. God had told him to go and speak to the servants of king Ahaziah.

Elijah told the servants that God was angry with Ahaziah for sending to an idol to know whether he should get well; and that God had said that he should never come down from his bed, but should surely die.

How surprised the servants must have been when they found that the man they met knew where they were going, and what the king's message was. They did not go on to the idol's house, but they went back to tell Ahaziah what the prophet had said. Then Ahaziah thought that perhaps the prophet was Elijah, for Ahaziah had often heard of him, and perhaps he had seen him. He said to the servants, What sort of a man was he?

And the servants said, He wore clothes covered with hair, and a leathern girdle.

Then Ahaziah said, It is Elijah.

Ahaziah was very angry with Elijah for having said that he should die, and he wanted to see him; but he knew that Elijah could

do wonders, so he determined to send a great many men to find Elijah, and to make him come. So he ordered a captain to take fifty soldiers with him, and to go and bring Elijah.

The captain found Elijah sitting on the top of a hill; and the captain spoke to him in a rude manner, and said, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.

Elijah said, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and burn up you and your fifty men.

And the fire came down from heaven, and burned up the captain and his fifty men.

How dreadful it must have been to see all these men burnt up in a moment! How easily God can punish wicked people when he chooses it! He might have burnt us up if he had chosen it, but he has been very kind to us.

Ahaziah found that the captain and the soldiers did not come back. Then Ahaziah sent another captain with fifty soldiers; and this captain found Elijah on the top of the hill; and he said, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. You see that this captain spoke even more rudely than the other

captain had done, for he said, Come down quickly.

And Elijah answered, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and burn you up, and your fifty men. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and burned them up. So these soldiers never returned to king Ahaziah.

Then he sent another captain and fifty other soldiers. Now this captain had heard what had happened to the other captains. Do you not think that he must have been very much frightened when Ahaziah told him to go and bring Elijah? What could this poor captain do? The king would have been very angry if he had said he would **not** go. This is what the captain did. He **went** to Elijah, and behaved in a very humble manner. He threw himself down upon his knees before Elijah, and begged Elijah to spare his life, and the lives of his soldiers, and not to let them be burnt up like the other soldiers. Was this captain burnt up? O no. God was too kind to burn him up. The angel of the Lord said to Elijah, Go down with him; be not afraid of him.

So Elijah went with this captain to king Ahaziah.

Elijah found Ahaziah lying sick in bed, and Elijah told him that because he had sent to ask the idol whether he should get well, God would never let him get well, but that he should die in that bed.

Very soon afterwards king Ahaziah died, and there was another king instead of him, and he was wicked like Ahab and Ahaziah.

Are you not surprised that Ahaziah did not order his servants to kill Elijah? I suppose that he was afraid to hurt Elijah; for God, you see, took care of him.

Are you afraid, dear children, lest God should send you to hell, and let you burn for ever and ever? Then you must do as the last captain did. You must pray to God to spare you, and he will hear you, because Christ died for you.

LESSON XXXI.

ELIJAH OR THE CHARIOT OF FIRE.

2 KINGS, 2: 1-15.

You remember, dear children, that Elijah once wished to die. But God chose that Elijah should never die, but should go up to heaven without dying. How pleased Elijah must have been, when he knew that God meant to do this. Should not you like, my dear child, to be caught up into heaven to see God, and to sing with the angels? But God chooses that we should die, and that our bodies should be put in the ground. Yet if Christ were to come again while we were alive, then we should be caught up into heaven without dying, if we loved Jesus; but perhaps Jesus may not come for a long while. When Elijah knew that he was soon going up into heaven, he went to a great many places first, where his friends lived. These friends were some good young prophets, who lived together and learned about God.

Once Elijah had no friends; he thought that nobody loved God but himself; but now he had

a great many friends. These young prophets knew that Elijah was soon going up to heaven. I think they must have felt sorry to part with him; only they knew that he was going to be happy.

Elisha wished very much to see Elijah go up to heaven. What do you think he determined to do?

To keep close to Elijah, and not to leave him. Elijah said to him, Pray stay at this place, while I go to another place, where the Lord has told me to go.

And Elisha said, I will not leave thee.

Soon afterwards Elijah said, Stay at this place, while I go on.

No, said Elisha, I will not leave thee.

Soon Elijah said again, Stay at this place, while I go on.

No, said Elisha, I will not leave thee.

So Elijah and Elisha walked a great way together from place to place. At last they came to the river Jordan. Then Elijah took off his cloak, and folded it up, and struck the waters with it; and God made a path through the waters, and Elijah and Elisha walked through the river on dry ground.

After they were gone over the river, Elijah said to Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee.

For what did Elisha ask? He wished to be such a prophet as Elijah was, so he asked for a great deal of his spirit. Was not this a good thing to ask for? Elisha wished to be a great prophet, that he might teach people about God. He did not want people to praise him; he wanted them to praise God.

Elijah said, You have asked a hard thing, but if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so; but if not, it shall not be so.

How much Elisha now hoped that he should see Elijah go up to heaven.

They still walked on, and talked to each other. What do you think they talked about? I am sure that they did not talk of foolish things. I think they talked of God, and of heaven, and of what they could do to please God. How happy Elijah must have felt when he knew he was soon going to see the God he loved so much.

As they were talking, there came down from heaven a chariot, and horses of fire—that is, angels, who are bright like the fire—and

Elijah was taken away from Elisha, and carried up into heaven: and Elisha saw him go up; and he cried out, My father, my father!

Elisha loved Elijah as if he had been his father; for he had taught him about God. Elisha was very sorry to lose his dear friend. As Elijah was taken away, his cloak fell from him, and Elisha picked it up, and when he came back to the river Jordan, he struck the waters with it as Elijah had done, and the waters went up on each side, and there was a dry path, and Elisha walked over alone.

Then Elisha saw that God had made him such a prophet as Elijah had been. Some of Elijah's friends were standing on the other side of the river, and they saw the wonder that Elisha had done, and they said, The spirit of Elijah is in Elisha. And they came, and bowed themselves down to him.

These young prophets used to mind what Elijah said, and now they wished to mind Elisha.

Now Elisha began to go about from place to place, as Elijah had once done, and teach people about God, and do wonders, to show people that his God was the true God.

You see, dear children, how happy God made Elijah at last. Once Elijah had been obliged to hide himself, because wicked people had tried to kill him; and he had often felt unhappy, because people would not turn to God. At last his tears were wiped away, and he went in a bright chariot to heaven. I wish, my dear child, you would begin now to pray to God, and to think of him. How happy you would be at last.

O no, Elisha will not leave

His father and his guide;

Till the last hour he'll closely cleave

To his belovèd side:

In vain Elijah bids him stay;

He still attends him on his way.

A gift Elijah bids him choose,

Ere he ascends on high;

For heavenly grace Elisha sues,

And begs a large supply,

Does not this hope console his heart,

That dreads with one beloved to part?

The voice he soon no more shall hear

Still speaks of heavenly things;

But now Elijah must appear

Before the King of kings:

A car of fire and angels bright,

Convey him to the worlds of light.

Does not Elisha long to go
Up to the same abode ?
Ah, still he must remain below,
To labor for his God :
At last he must submit to die,
Before he sees the worlds on high.

It was indeed an honor rare
From God's all sovereign hand,
No death to see, but cleave the air
And join the saintly band :
The grave's prepared for Adam's sons,
Save those who live when Jesus comes.

Ah, then, the living saints shall soar
And meet him in the sky,
And death the righteous shall restore,
Who in the cold grave lie ;
And sin and sorrow, death and pain,
Shall ne'er be known by them again.

LESSON XXXII.

ELISHA, OR THE BEARS.

2 KINGS, 2:23-25; 4:1-7.

DEAR children, do you think that people loved Elisha? People who loved God loved Elisha very much, but wicked people hated him. There were some people who even dared to laugh at him: there were even some little children who dared to mock him. I will tell you about these children.

Did you know that people who have no hair, or only a little hair, on their heads, are called bald? Elisha was bald. One day Elisha came near a town where a great many people lived who worshipped idols. One of the golden calves that Jeroboam made was in this town. A great many little children came out of it and met Elisha, as he was in the road; and they mocked him, and said, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. They told Elisha to go up to heaven as Elijah had done, that they might not see him any more, nor hear what he said.

How did they dare to speak in this way to

the prophet of the Lord? But some children still dare to take God's name in vain. Elisha turned back, and looked on them, and told them that God would send them a dreadful punishment.

The children soon found that Elisha had spoken truth; for two bears came out of the wood, and tore forty-two of these children into pieces.

No doubt the children cried, and screamed, and tried to run away, when they saw the bears coming; but it was of no use; they could not escape: the bears overtook them, and killed them. What must their parents have said, when they heard what had happened to their dear children? You know, my little dear, how your mother would cry, if you were to be eaten up by a bear. There are no bears or lions here to kill you; but God will punish you in hell, if you are wicked. I hope that you do not like to hear people say bad words. I hope that you will never say them yourself, and that you will never laugh at people who love God.

You have now heard what became of wicked children who mocked Elisha, and you shall

hear next of Elisha's kindness to a good poor woman.

This woman had lost her husband, so she was a widow. Her husband had been a good prophet: he had been very poor, and had not been able to pay for all the things he had bought.

People should never get into debt so long as they have money enough to buy bread; but perhaps this poor prophet had not had money enough even to buy bread.

The poor woman came to Elisha and said, My husband is dead. And he did fear the Lord; but I cannot pay my debts, and a man is come to me, to take away my two sons to be slaves.

The poor woman was very unhappy at the thought of losing her dear boys. Your mother, dear child, would not like that you should be taken from her, and made a slave. But people in this country cannot take you away from your parents, and make you a slave.

Elisha was sorry for this poor woman, and he said, What shall I do for thee? Tell me, what hast thou in the house?

And the woman said, I have nothing but

one pot of oil. This oil was sweet oil, and was used for food.

Elisha said, Go and borrow a great many empty cups, jugs, and basins, and bring them into thy house, and shut the door upon thee and thy sons, and pour the oil you have got into all these cups, and basins; and when they are full of oil, put them by.

Could a little oil fill a great number of cups and basins? But the woman knew that Elisha could do miracles, because God was with him to help him.

So the woman did as Elisha had told her.

She borrowed the cups, jugs, mugs, and basins, and shut herself up in her house with her sons, and began to pour out her oil. She poured, and poured, and still there was oil left in her pot. At last she said to her son, Bring me another cup. But he said, There is no more. And then she saw there was no more oil in her pot. So she went to Elisha, and asked him what she was to do; and he said, Go and sell your oil, and pay your debt; and when the debt is paid, keep all the money that is over to buy bread for yourself and your children.

How happy the poor widow must have been; and how happy the boys must have been. They were going to be made slaves, but now they might stay with their mother. You see, dear children, how kind God was to them. I hope they grew up to be good like their father.

But how sad it is to think of the children who were eaten up by the bears. Perhaps their parents had not taught them to love God. But I do teach you about God, my dear child. I hope you will not make God angry with you. Never laugh at any person who is lame, or blind, or whose back is broken; but, more than all, never laugh at people who pray to God. Never laugh at any person who preaches, either in a church or in the streets."

Our tongues were made to bless the Lord,
And not speak ill of men;
When others give a railing word,
We must not rail again.

Cross names and angry words require
To be chastised at school;
And he is in danger of hell-fire,
That calls his brother fool.

But lips that dare be so profane,
To mock, and jeer, and scoff
At holy things, or holy men,
The Lord shall cut them off.

When children in their wanton play
Served old Elisha so,
And bid the prophet go his way—
“Go up, thou bald-head, go;”

God quickly stopped their wicked breath,
And sent two raging bears,
That tore them limb from limb to death,
With blood, and groans, and tears.

Great God, how terrible art thou,
To sinners e'er so young!
Grant me thy grace, and teach me how
To tame and rule my tongue.

Dr. Watts

LESSON XXXIII.

ELISHA, OR THE LITTLE ROOM.

2 KINGS, 4 : 8-37.

ELISHA used to go about from place to place to teach people about God. Those people who loved God were kind to Elisha, and gave him food.

There was one very rich lady who used to ask Elisha, whenever he passed by her house, to come in.

This kind woman wished that she had in her house a room for Elisha to sleep in, and she said to her husband, Let us make a little room close to our house ; and let us put in it a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick, that Elisha may sleep in it when he comes this way.

And the lady's husband allowed her to have such a little room built. Soon afterwards Elisha came by that way, and he slept in the room the woman had built. Elisha must have liked it very much—he could sit there alone, and think of God ; and he could write in it, because there was a table in it ; and when it was dark he could light the candle, and go on

writing or reading. I know that he prayed to God in this room; for Elisha often prayed to his God. I hope, my dear child, that you pray to God in the room you sleep in.

Elisha thought that the woman had been very kind to make such a nice room for him, and he wished to do something to please her; for Elisha was grateful: he was very kind to people who were kind to him. Now Elisha had a servant called Gehazi. Elisha told Gehazi to ask the woman to come to him. And she came and stood before Elisha. Then Elisha thanked her for her kindness in making the room for him, and he asked whether she would like to have him speak to the king about her, so that the king might send for her, and take notice of her.

Then the woman said, No, she would rather stay where she was; and then she went out of the room.

So Elisha said to Gehazi, What shall I do for her?

And Gehazi said, She has no child.

Gehazi thought that she would like to have a little child. It was true that this lady and her husband did wish for a child. Then Eli-

sha told Gehazi to call her again, and she came, and stood at the door.

And Elisha said to her, Next year you shall have a son.

The woman was very much surprised to hear this, and she could hardly believe it. Next year she had a son. She was very fond of it indeed. She thought it was very kind in God to give it to her. Do you not think she loved Elisha more than ever, since he had asked God to give her this child?

One day when the child was grown old enough to talk, he went out with his father into a field where men were reaping; for his father had a great many fields full of grain, which his servants reaped. It was the morning, yet the sun was getting hot, for the child soon cried out, My head, my head! The child felt such a pain in his head, that he could not stay in the field.

So the father said to one of his servants, Carry him to his mother. The servant carried him home to his mother, and he sat on her knees till twelve o'clock, and then he died.

O how sad the mother was, when she found her little boy was dead. I have often heard of

little children dying quite suddenly, like this poor little boy. Every day we should think, Am I ready to die, if I were to die to-day?

Now you shall hear what the mother did with the dead child. She went into the room she had made for Elisha, and laid him on his bed, and shut the door, and went out. Elisha lived at a place a good way off, and the lady wished very much to go and see him. I need not tell you why she wished to see him. She asked her husband to allow her to have one of the servants to go with her, and one of the asses for her to ride upon, that she might go to Elisha, and come again soon. And her husband said, Why do you want to go to Elisha to-day? This is not the Sabbath-day. Because Elisha used to teach people about God on the Sabbath-day.

And the woman said, It shall be well. But she did not tell her husband why she wanted to go: I suppose she was afraid of grieving him. A servant went with the lady, and she said to the servant, Go quickly, and do not stop, unless I tell you.

At last they came to the hill where Elisha was. He was with his servant Gehazi; and

he saw the woman coming, while she was still a great way off, and he wanted to know why she was coming to him so quickly, for he thought that something was the matter. So he said to Gehazi, Run now to meet her, and say, Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with thy child?

So Gehazi ran, and asked the woman whether it was well with them. And she said, It is well. Why did she say it was well? Was not her child dead? But she knew that it was well, or right, because God had made her child die, and she knew that all that God does is well. Yet the poor lady felt very unhappy. When she came up to Elisha, she got off her ass, and threw her arms round Elisha's feet, and Gehazi was going to thrust her away. Was not that very unkind? But Elisha would not let him do so, but said, Let her alone; she is very unhappy, and God has not told me what has happened to her. Elisha only knew such things when God told him.

Then the woman said to Elisha, Did I ask you for a son?

Then Elisha saw that her son was dead. So Elisha gave his own staff or stick to Ge-

hazi, and told him to go quickly, and not to stop to speak to any one by the way, and to lay the staff upon the face of the child. But the woman would not go with Gehazi; she said to Elisha, I will not leave thee. She liked better being with Elisha, than with unkind Gehazi. She knew that Elisha loved God: Gehazi did not love God, he was wicked; but I am not sure whether the woman knew that he was wicked, for he pretended to be good.

Gehazi went on first, and laid the staff on the child's face, but the child did not hear his voice, nor speak; he remained quite dead. So Gehazi went back, and met Elisha coming along with the woman, and Gehazi said, The child is not awaked.

At last Elisha came to the house. He went into his own little room, and found the child lying dead on the bed, and he shut the door, and he staid in the room alone with the dead child. Then he prayed to God to make him alive again; and then he lay upon the child, putting his mouth upon the child's mouth, and his eyes upon the child's eyes, and his hands upon the child's hands, and he stretched himself upon him, and the child's flesh began

to grow warm. Then he got up, and walked up and down, and then he stretched himself again over the child; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

Then Elisha called Gehazi, and desired him to tell the woman to come. And when she came into the room, Elisha said, Take up thy son; for the child was lying on the bed. O how glad the mother was; how thankful to God, and to Elisha. Before she took up the child, she fell at Elisha's feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and then she took up her child, and went out of the room.

Was not this a great wonder that Elisha had done?

Elijah once made a widow's child alive again; and now Elisha made a child alive again: for Elisha was such a prophet as Elijah had been, and could do wonders like him. God had promised that he should be like Elijah, if he saw him taken up to heaven; and God kept his promise.

Ought not the people of Israel to have minded all that Elisha said, when they heard of the wonders that he did? They might be quite sure that Elisha was a true prophet.

Does God now make little children alive when they die? No; he waits till the last day: then the trumpet shall sound, and all the children's bodies shall rise from their graves, and the bodies of holy children shall be taken up to heaven, but the bodies of wicked children shall be burned in hell.

Elisha oft the kindness shared
Of one who lands possessed;
A little chamber she prepared,
Where safely he might rest.

The prophet soon implored his God
Her kindness to requite;
And God a little child bestowed,
In whom she took delight.

This little child, one summer morn,
Into the fields was led;
And as he stood among the corn,
He cried, "My head, my head!"

The father bade a lad convey
The child unto his home;
Upon his mother's knees he lay,
And died when noon was come.

The mother laid him on the bed,
Within the room she built,
And to the place with haste she sped,
Where good Elisha dwelt.

From far Elisha saw her come,
And longed her grief to know ;
He bade Gehazi quickly run,
And hear her tale of woe.

And did the woman say, "'Tis well,"
Nor murmur with her tongue ?
Though mothers' hearts alone can tell
What grief her bosom wrung.

In this distress she placed her trust
In God's great love and power ;
She knew that he who gave him first,
Could now her child restore.

Ah, soon to heal the mother's pain,
To God the prophet cries ;
The child grows warm, and once again
He opes his beaming eyes.

CHILD.

No prophet lives that can perform
So wonderful a deed ;
No clay-cold flesh shall now grow warm,
Although the righteous plead.

This is the time to pray for *souls*,
That they may pardoned be ;
For rapid as a river rolls,
So hours and minutes flee.

I'll ask the righteous for their prayers,
And I myself will pray,
"For Jesus' sake, behold my tears,
And wash my sins away."

LESSON XXXIV.

ELISHA, OR THE LITTLE MAID.

2 KINGS, 5.

THERE were a great many heathen people who lived outside the land of Canaan. You know, my dear child, that people who worship idols are called "heathen." Some of these heathen people used often to come into Canaan, and rob them, and hurt them. Why did God let the people of Israel be robbed and hurt? Because they did not obey him, and mind what Elisha taught them.

Once some of these heathen people came, and took away a little girl out of the land of Israel; and they sold her for a slave to wait on a rich heathen lady in a country a great way off. The lady's husband was called Naaman, and he was a great captain, and could fight well in battle.

But Naaman was very unhappy, for he had a very dreadful disease called the leprosy. He had very sore white places on his body. He could not find any body who could cure him of his disease. No doctors could cure

him; nor could any of the priests of his idols save him. Now the little girl who waited on his wife had heard of the wonders that Elisha did, and she felt sure that he could cure her master, and she said, O that my master were with the prophet that is in my country; for he would cure his leprosy. Do you think that Elisha could cure Naaman? Yes, God often helped Elisha to do wonders.

Somebody heard what the little girl said, and went and told Naaman. Naaman wished very much to be made well, and so he determined to go to the land of Israel, and to ask Elisha to make him well.

Now Elisha heard that he was coming, and Elisha knew that God would help him to make Naaman well; and he hoped that when Naaman was made well, he would worship the true God, who could do such wonders; for Elisha did not wish people to praise him, he wished them to praise God.

Naaman came into Canaan in a fine chariot with horses, and he brought a great many servants with him. Naaman was very proud, and he expected that Elisha would pay him a great deal of respect, because he was so rich

and great. He drove up to Elisha's door, but Elisha did not come out to meet him; he only sent a messenger, who said to Naaman, Go and wash in the river Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be well.

Then Naaman was very angry, and he said, I thought that the prophet would have come out to me, and would have stood, and called on the name of the Lord his God, and struck his hand over the sore place, and made me well. Besides being angry at this, Naaman did not like to wash in a river of the land of Canaan; he would rather have washed in one of the fine large rivers of his own country. Naaman was so very angry that he was going home to his own country, without washing in Jordan; but his servants came to him to persuade him to wash in Jordan. They said, If the prophet had desired you to do some very hard thing, would you not have done it, that you might have been made well? Now he tells you to do a very easy thing; only to wash in the river Jordan; and will you not do it? It was kind in the servants to try and persuade Naaman to wash in Jordan.

Naaman listened to what they said; he

went to, Jordan, and he dipped in it seven times, and his flesh grew as soft and smooth as the flesh of a little child.

Now Naaman was very glad that he had done as Elisha had told him. I hope he was sorry for having been in such a passion at first.

Where do you think that Naaman went, when he was well? Did he go home immediately to his own country again? O no, that would have been very ungrateful. He went first to Elisha's house, and he brought all his servants with him.

He did not feel so proud as he had done before: he did not expect Elisha to come out to him, but he went in to Elisha; and he told him that he was sure that Elisha's God was the true God, and he promised that he would never worship idols any more. How glad Elisha must have been to hear Naaman say that he would worship the true God.

Naaman wished to give Elisha some money and some beautiful things, as a reward for having made him well; so he begged him to take some of the things he had brought with him. But Elisha would not take any thing. Why would not Elisha take any thing? He

wished to show Naaman that he had not made him well in order to get money. You know, dear children, that Elisha had made him well that he might believe in the true God.

Naaman begged Elisha very much to take something; but Elisha still said he would take nothing. You see that Elisha did not care for money.

Then Naaman set out in his chariot to go back to his own country. You remember that Elisha had a servant called Gehazi: Gehazi heard his master Elisha say he would not take any thing from Naaman, and Gehazi wished very much that he could get some of the beautiful things himself; so he thought of a way of getting them by telling lies. Gehazi was a child of Satan, who is the father of liars.

So Gehazi ran after Naaman's chariot; at last Naaman saw him running, and he stopped the chariot, and got out, for he was afraid that something was the matter. Naaman said, Is all well? And Gehazi said, All is well, but there are two visitors at our house, very good men, who are very poor, and my master would like some silver, and two suits of clothes, to give to them.

Was this true? Naaman did not know that Gehazi was telling lies; so he gave Gehazi twice as much silver as he asked for, and put it in two bags, and he gave him two suits of clothes, and he desired two of his servants to carry them for Gehazi; and Gehazi led the servants to a place with thick walls, where he used to keep things, and he desired the servants to put them there. Then the servants went back to Naaman, to go with him to their own land.

Then Gehazi went to Elisha's house to wait upon Elisha. He little thought that Elisha knew of his wickedness. He thought that Elisha could never find him out, because Naaman was gone a great way off, and could not tell Elisha that he had given some things to Gehazi. But there was One who saw him. God saw him, and God told Elisha what Gehazi had done. And God told Elisha what Gehazi meant to buy with the money. What did Gehazi mean to buy with it? Vineyards and fields, and sheep, and oxen, and slaves. And did Gehazi think that these things could make him happy, while the great God was angry with him?

Now I will tell you what Elisha said to Gehazi when he saw him.

He said to him, Where do you come from, Gehazi? And Gehazi said, I have not been anywhere. Was that true? You see that Gehazi told another lie to hide his wickedness. Then Elisha said, Did not my heart go with thee, when Naaman turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Let the leprosy of Naaman be upon thee for ever. Immediately sore white places came on Gehazi's skin, and he went out of Elisha's sight. Gehazi could not live with Elisha any more, for people who had the leprosy were obliged to live by themselves. I do not know whether he ever repented of his wickedness. You see, dear children, how angry God is with liars, and what dreadful punishments he sends them. Never try to get things by telling lies, for if no one should find you out, God sees you, and will send you to hell. Perhaps you have told lies already. O, dear children, confess your lies to God. He will forgive you, because Jesus died that sinners might be forgiven.

Gehazi thought no eye beheld,
When he the Syrian's gift concealed;

But God, to whom all things are known,
His deeds had to Elisha shown.

Though innocent he tried to look,
Yet sure the guilty servant shook,
When all the wicked plans he made
Were by Elisha open laid.

His greedy heart had longed to gain
Of men and maids a goodly train,
And fields that yielded corn and wine,
And flocks of sheep, and herds of kine.

But while he dreamt of years of ease,
His flesh was filled with foul disease;
Covered with scales of loathsome white,
He fled from good Elisha's sight.

CHILD.

O glory to God's holy name,
If I have never dared to frame
A lie so covetous and bold,
As that which once Gehazi told.

Yet God accounts it wickedness
To wish for things I don't possess;
And I have oft in secret sighed
For things that God to me denied.

Each thought is noticed by thine eye,
And written in the book on high:
I know *my* sins are written there;
For Jesus' sake ■ sinner spare.

LESSON XXXV.

THE LAST KING OF ISRAEL, AND HIS PEOPLE.

2 KINGS, 17: 1-24.

My dear children, I have told you a great deal about Elisha. You have heard what a great many wonders he did. Did the people of Israel mind what he said; or did they still go on in wickedness? They went on in their wickedness.

At last Elisha died. God did not take him up to heaven in a chariot of fire. He died in his bed, and his spirit went to heaven, but his body was buried in the ground. After Elisha was dead, the people of Israel grew still more wicked. King Ahab had been a wicked king, and Ahaziah his son had been wicked, and the next king was wicked: and when he died, there was another king, and he was wicked; and at last he died, and there was another king, and he was wicked; and there were a great many kings of Israel, one after the other, and they were all wicked. At last God determined to send a great punishment to all the people of Israel.

You shall hear what it was.

There was a king who lived a great way off, in a country called Assyria, and the king was called the king of Assyria. He was a heathen king, and was very rich, and he had a great many soldiers. The king of Assyria came with his soldiers into the land of Canaan, and fought against the people, and conquered them; the soldiers got into all their towns, and took away their things in them, and they took the people away to be their slaves.

How unhappy the people of Israel were, when they were taken away from their houses and gardens, and obliged to go a great way off, and work very hard.

This was the punishment God sent them at last, because they would worship idols, and do many wicked things. They never came into their own country again, but heathen people came and lived in it.

I hope, my dear children, that you will not be like the people of Israel, for if you are, God will send you some great punishment at last. If he does not punish you while you live, he will as soon as you are dead.

LESSON XXXVI.

HEZEKIAH, OR THE KING WHO TRUSTED
IN GOD.

2 KINGS, 18: 19.

I AM now going to speak to you about something I told you a long while ago. I shall be much pleased if I find that you have not forgotten it, for it is a thing hard to remember. Do you remember that God had been angry with king Solomon, and that God had said his son should be king only over part of Canaan? What God had said came true. Jeroboam took away a great deal of the land from Solomon's son. Jeroboam was called the king of Israel, and Solomon's son was called king of Judah. Now Solomon's son lived in Jerusalem, but Jeroboam lived in the other part of the land.*

I have told you about some of the kings of Israel, about Ahab and Ahaziah; but there were a great many more besides, and they were all wicked, so that God let the king of Assyria come at last and take the king and

* The young reader should refer to the map, where the two kingdoms may be seen.

the people of Israel into Assyria, which was a country a great way off.

I have not told you about the kings of Judah. When Solomon's son died, his son was king of Judah; and when *he* died, his son was king—and so there were a great many kings one after another: some of the kings of Judah were good, and some were wicked. At last there was a good king called Hez-e-ki-ah. He lived at Jerusalem, and he liked to worship God in the temple, and ~~he~~ he persuaded a great many people to come and worship God; for Hezekiah loved God.

Now you shall hear what care God took of Hezekiah. God had let the king of Assyria take away the people of Israel. Would God let him hurt the good king of Judah? Hear what God did.

The king of Assyria sent some of his soldiers to Jerusalem; and they brought their tents, and waited all round the city, and tried to get in. The walls around the city were high and strong, and the people shut the gates fast; still, they were afraid lest the king of Assyria's soldiers should get in at last. But Hezekiah knew that God could keep them from being

hurt. The people of Assyria spoke very wicked words against God, while they were waiting outside Jerusalem; and one day the king of Assyria wrote a letter, and sent it to Hezekiah.

It was a very wicked letter; this was what was written in it: Your God cannot save you from the king of Assyria, who has conquered a great many countries: the gods of those people could not save them, neither can your God save you.

Some men brought this letter to king Hezekiah, and he read it. He could not bear to read such wicked words against God; so he took it into the temple, and spread the letter before God, and began to pray. He said, O God, thou art the true God; thou hast made heaven and earth. Other gods are only idols, made of wood and stone; they could not keep people from being hurt. O save us from the king of Assyria, that every body may know that thou art the only God.

God heard Hezekiah's prayer. Now I will tell you what God did that night. He sent his angel to kill a great many of the people of Assyria as they lay in their tents. The angel did not kill them all; but the rest were

very much frightened, when they found that so many had died in the night; and they went back to their own country, and they did not get into Jerusalem.

So God saved Hezekiah, king of Judah. Hezekiah was glad that all the people saw that his God was the true God. God can keep all people from being hurt. What should we do when we are frightened? We should pray to God to save us.

Does it never frighten you to think of the devil and all his wicked angels? Now is the time, my dear child, to pray to God to save us from them. God will hear us.

Why will he hear us? Is it because we are good, that he will hear us? No, that is not the reason; for no one is really good. But this is the reason: because he is kind and good, and because he promised Jesus that he would hear us. Jesus died that his Father might hear our prayers, and forgive us our sins.

The Assyrian host unburied lie,
While from each vale, and hill, and wood,
Wild beasts and birds are hastening nigh,
To eat their flesh and drink their blood.

The hand that lately grasped a sword,
The eye of pride, the lip of scorn,
The tongue that railed against the Lord,
By fangs and talons shall be torn.

How sweet the dawn of that dread day,
On those who safe in Zion dwell !
On cymbals, harps, and lutes they play,
And praise the God of Israel.

He heard the wicked heathen boast,
And Hezekiah's humble prayer :
His angels slew the Assyrian host,
While Israel slept beneath his care.

CHILD.

How easy 't were for God to slay
His enemies this very night !
O why does he so long delay
To make them feel his dreadful might ?

'Tis love that makes him slow to kill ;
He waits that all men may repent ;
Yet, if they grieve his goodness still,
They'll share in endless punishment.

LESSON XXXVII.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR, OR THE GOLDEN
IMAGE.

2 CHRON. 36: 11-20; DANIEL 3.

How kind God had been to Hezekiah, king of Judah.

God would not let the people of Assyria hurt him. At last Hezekiah died, and there was another king; and at last he died, and there was another king; and at last he died, and there was another king; and so there were a great many kings, one after another, and most of them were very wicked. Most of the people in Jerusalem were wicked, and worshipped idols. So God sent prophets to tell them that he would not keep them from being hurt any more, and that he would let some heathen king take them a great way off. You remember that the people in the other part of Canaan, who were called the people of Israel, had been taken away by the king of Assyria; and God said that the people of Judah should be taken away by some other king.

At last there came a rich, proud king, called Nebuchadnezzar, to fight against the people in Jerusalem. This king came from a country called Babylon. He had a great many soldiers, who placed their tents all round Jerusalem. At last they got into the city, and they broke down the wall, and they burnt a great many of the fine houses, and they even burnt the beautiful temple that Solomon had built, and they took away the golden things that he had put in it, the gold basins, and candlesticks, and altars, spoons, and cups, and shovels, and they took them to Babylon, to put them in the house of their idols.

Nebuchadnezzar also took the king that was then at Jerusalem, and put out both his eyes, and brought him to Babylon, and kept him in prison till he died: he killed a great many people, and he took a great many more with him to be slaves in Babylon.

How very sorry the people were to leave their own beautiful city and temple, and to go to Babylon.

They sat down by the rivers of Babylon, and wept, and they would not sing psalms as they used to do, but they hung their harps

upon the willow-trees that grew by the water-side. Psalm 137.

Why did God let them be taken from the land of Canaan?

Because they had sinned against him.

Some of the people who were taken to Babylon, loved God. I will tell you about three young men who loved God very much, and who would not worship idols.

Nebuchadnezzar once made a very large image of gold: it was higher than a very tall tree. This image was placed out of doors, and Nebuchadnezzar sent for all the judges and captains in his land, and for a great many rich people, to come and see this golden image. Now Nebuchadnezzar had made the three good young men judges; so that they were obliged to come to see the golden image. When all these captains, and judges, and rich men had come, they stood round the image, and a man called out very loud, O people, when the music begins to be played, then fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship, shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace.

Do you know, dear children, what a furnace is? It is a place full of fire; it is like a very large oven. How horrible it must be to be put into a furnace! Would the three good young men worship the image, or would they not?

Very soon the music began to play, and the people fell down, and worshipped the image.

Then some men came to Nebuchadnezzar, and said, O king, live for ever. Did you not desire that every man should fall down and worship the golden image, when the music was played; and that if any one did not worship, he should be cast into a fiery furnace? There are three men who have not minded what you said: they never worship your gods, nor have they worshipped the golden image you set up.

Then Nebuchadnezzar was in a rage, and he desired the men to be brought to him. Then these men were brought before the king. And Nebuchadnezzar said to them, Is it true that you do not worship my gods, nor the golden image I have set up? Now if next time the music is played, you fall down and worship, it is well; but if not, you shall be cast into the

furnace. And who is the God that can deliver you out of my hand ?

Then the young men answered the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, our God is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image thou hast set up.

Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury ; and his face looked quite different from before, because he was in such a great passion.

He desired his servants to make the furnace seven times hotter than usual, and he ordered the strongest of his soldiers to throw the three young men into the furnace. First the young men were bound, so that they might not be able to move when they were in the fire ; and their clothes were not taken off. Then the strong soldiers threw them into the furnace ; and the flames were so great, that the soldiers who put in the young men caught fire, and were burnt up. The three young men fell down in the midst of the furnace,

Nebuchadnezzar was near the furnace, and watched to see the young men burning. But O, how much surprised he was to see them

walking about the furnace, and to see ■ man with them, who looked like the Son of God.

Nebuchadnezzar cried out to his servants, Did we not cast three men into the fire? And they answered, True, O king.

And Nebuchadnezzar said, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and one of them is like the Son of God.

Nebuchadnezzar had never seen the Son of God; but he had never seen a man like him who was in the furnace, so he supposed that he must be a god. Was it not kind in God to come, and walk with these young men in the furnace?

Then Nebuchadnezzar went to the furnace, and called the young men by their names, and said, O servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. And the three young men came out of the furnace. Then all the judges and captains came near and looked at the young men, and saw that they were not the least hurt, not a hair of their heads was singed, nor were their clothes scorched, nor did they even smell of fire. Then Nebuchadnezzar saw that there was a God who could

deliver his servants from the burning flame ; and Nebuchadnezzar said, that if any person spoke against God he should be cut to pieces, and his house should be made a dunghill. And the king was very much pleased with these three young men.

Do you think that the young men had been happy while they were in the fire ? Yes, I think they must have been happy, for they had such a friend walking with them. Were they not glad that they had not worshipped the golden image ? If they had been burnt, their spirits would have gone to heaven ; but God did not let them be burnt, that all people might see that he was the true God, and that every body should worship him.

Though all the other people worshipped the image, they did not. If other people do wicked things, should we do them too ? My dear children, if all your little companions do a wrong thing, still you should do what is right, that you may please God. If you see every body else breaking the Sabbath-day, remember that you ought to keep it.

If other children are disobedient, and join in doing something they are not allowed to do,

still, dear child, remember God sees you. If the other children laugh at you, do not mind it, for God is pleased.

I hope you will be like these three good young men. Then, if you should die suddenly, your spirit would go to God, and you would be happy for ever.

Thousands are met in that great plain,
Where a vast golden image stands;
They hear the music's thundering strain—
They kneel, for so the king commands.

Three men refuse to bow the knee
Before that golden image vast;
They still refuse: the faithful three
Into the fiery flames are cast.

But lo, they walk amid the flames,
Nor seem to feel the raging heat;
It does not scorch their tender frames,
But burns the bands around their feet.

And does the Son of God descend
To guard them by his wondrous power?
Ah, is he not a loving friend,
Who flies to help in trouble's hour?

His glorious form the king admires,
And views the three with wondering eyes!
At his command they leave the fires,
Which were to them like paradise.

CHILD.

This golden image seems to me
Like sin, when it appears most bright;
Thousands around still bend the knee,
And in its pleasures take delight.

If I refuse to do the same,
Perhaps they'll show me hate and scorn;
But He who to the furnace came,
Will never leave my soul forlorn.

I've heard that in the days gone by,
Some have been burnt for Jesus' sake :
Ah, dearest Saviour, thou wert nigh,
When they were suffering at the stake.

LESSON XXXVIII.

BELSHAZZAR, OR THE WRITING ON THE WALL.

DANIEL 5.

AT last Nebuchadnezzar the proud king of Babylon died, and there was another king of Babylon, called Belshazzar. He was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar; and he was like Nebuchadnezzar, for he was proud, and he worshipped idols.

One day he made a great feast, and a great many rich men, called lords, came to his feast, and Belshazzar drank wine before them. Do you remember, my dear children, that Nebuchadnezzar had taken the gold and silver cups, that were in the temple at Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon? Belshazzar wished that these cups might be brought, for him, and his lords, and his wives, to drink wine out of them. So they were brought, and Belshazzar, and his lords, and his wives drank wine in them; and while they drank, they praised their idols, which were made of gold, and silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

Was it not wicked in Belshazzar and his lords to take the cups which were once in the house of the true God, and to praise idols while they were drinking in them?

O yes, and God was very angry; because, although Belshazzar had heard about the true God, yet he worshipped idols, and praised them. Now you shall hear what God did to Belshazzar.

Did not God see this wickedness?

While the king was drinking, he saw the fingers of a man's hand writing on the wall of the palace, near where the candlestick was. He did not see a man, only some fingers. The king was very much frightened: he did not look merry any longer, but he trembled very much, and his knees knocked against each other.

Belshazzar wanted to know what was written on the wall: there were four words written there, but the king could not read that kind of writing; so he sent for all the men in Babylon who were called wise and clever, and who said they could tell hard things.

Belshazzar said, Whoever will read that writing, and tell the meaning of it, shall be

clothed in scarlet, (such as kings used to wear,) and shall have a golden chain to wear on his neck, and shall be made a great judge.

A great many men tried to read the writing, but they could not. Then Belshazzar was still more frightened, and looked very much terrified, and his lords were frightened also. They were afraid that something very dreadful had been written on the wall: they thought something sad was going to happen. Now Belshazzar had a mother living. She was called the queen. She heard what had happened, and she came into the room where Belshazzar was, and said, O king, live for ever. Do not be frightened, there is a man in Babylon who is very wise indeed, and who can tell the meaning of things; his name is Daniel. Let him be called, and he will know the meaning of the writing.

Now this Daniel was one of the men whom Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem: he was an Israelite. When he first came to Babylon he was quite young, but now he was old: he was very wise, and he loved God very much.

Belshazzar sent for Daniel to come to him.

Then Belshazzar said, I hear that you can tell the meaning of things: if you can read the writing on the wall, and tell the meaning of it, you shall be clothed in scarlet, and wear a gold chain, and be made a great judge.

But Daniel said, I do not want any reward, yet I will read the writing, and tell the meaning of it.

Then Daniel told Belshazzar, that the true God was very angry with him for being so proud, and for sending for the cups of His temple, and for drinking in them, and praising idols; and for not worshipping God, though he had heard of him, and knew that it was God alone who gave him life, and riches, and honor, and power. Daniel said, that the writing on the wall meant that he should soon be king no more, but that some people would come and take his land from him.

Then Belshazzar ordered that Daniel should be clothed in scarlet, and wear a golden chain about his neck, and that many people should obey him.

That very night, a king from another country got into Babylon with a great many soldiers, and killed Belshazzar, and took his

throne, and his crown, and all he had. So the words that God had written on the wall came true.

What has God written down in his book about those who do not love him? Has he not said that he will come and punish them? Does it frighten you to think of this day, my dear child? It certainly will come.

I have often told you what we should pray for; so I hope, my dear child, that you are praying for the Holy Spirit.

Belshazzar, with his lords at night,
Is feasting in the palace hall :
What fills the king with sudden fright?
Behold that hand upon the wall.

Well might he fear the wrath divine,
Who sent for hallowed cups of gold,
Polluted them with draughts of wine,
And idol gods in songs extolled.

'Tis true, the God he disobeyed,
From heaven with anger has looked down,
In balances his soul has weighed,
And torn away his kingly crown.

And this is written on the wall,
And Daniel can the words explain :
Fierce soldiers rush into the hall—
That night the wicked king is slain.

CHILD.

O Lord, and didst thou punish thus
A heathen, for ungodly mirth?
What reverence wilt thou claim from us,
Who learnt to know thee from our birth
I'll never wear a smiling look
When others lightly speak of thee,
Lest thou shouldst write down in thy book
Some dreadful sentence against me.

LESSON XXXIX.

DANIEL, OR THE DEN OF LIONS.

DANIEL 6.

THE name of the king that conquered Belshazzar was Da-ri-us. He was a proud man, and he worshipped idols; yet he liked Daniel very much, and set him over all the other judges, and lords, and told all the people to mind him. Daniel was a very wise old man, and he was fit to be a judge. There were a great many rich men who hated Daniel, because the king told them to mind Daniel, and because the king liked Daniel better than them. These men were envious of Daniel. They were like Cain, who was envious of Abel, and like Joseph's brothers, who were envious of Joseph, and like Saul, who was envious of David.

Perhaps, my dear child, you have sometimes felt envious, when you have heard people praise another child, and seen them give it presents. Then you were like Satan. You must pray to God to keep you from being envious, for we are very apt to be envious, because we have wicked hearts.

These wicked rich men wished to hurt Daniel, and to get him into disgrace with king Darius; but they did not know how to get him into disgrace; they never saw Daniel do any thing wrong. I suppose they were afraid of telling the king lies of Daniel, lest they should be found out. But at last they thought of a way to get Daniel into disgrace. They knew that he prayed very often to God; so they went to the king, and asked him to make a law, that no one should pray to any God or man, but to the king himself, for thirty days; and that if any one did pray to any one else, he should be cast into a den of lions. Now the king did not know why these men asked him to make this law: if the king had known that Daniel always prayed to God, I do not think he would have made this law, for the king loved Daniel.

The king was so foolish as to say that he would do as these men wished, because, you know, the king was a heathen, and he did not love the true God. So he wrote down the law, and promised not to change it.

Daniel heard of the law that the king had made.

Do you think that he went on praying? Daniel would have thought it very dreadful not to pray to God for thirty days. He wanted to praise God very often, and ask him to bless him.

He used always to pray before the open window in his room. Perhaps you wonder why he did so. The reason was, he liked to look towards the place where he knew Jerusalem was. He could not see Jerusalem from his window, because it was so very far off; but still he knew which way it was, and he knew that God loved Jerusalem, and that God used to come down into the temple, before it was burnt; so Daniel liked to look that way when he prayed.

He knelt down three times every day, and prayed, and thanked God for all his kindness to him. And he knelt at his window just as usual, for he was not ashamed nor afraid to pray.

The men who hated Daniel heard that he went on praying; so they went one day to look at him while he was praying, that they might tell the king that they had seen him.

Then they asked the king, Did you not make a law, that if any one prayed to any god or

man, excepting you, that he should be cast into a den of lions?

And the king said, Yes, it is true, and I cannot change the law.

Then the men said, That Daniel, who was brought from Jerusalem to be a slave, does not mind you, nor your law, but prays three times a day.

Then the king was very sorry that he had made a law against praying, and tried to think of some way of not letting Daniel be killed; but he could think of no way. In the evening the men came to him, and said, You cannot alter the law that you have made, for in our country laws may not be altered.

Then the king desired Daniel to be brought, and he was cast into a den of lions; the lions lived in a deep place under ground. Lions are always very hungry in the evening, and roar for their food. Would they not eat up Daniel, as soon as he was thrown into the den?

But Darius knew that Daniel's God was a very great God, and he said to Daniel, Your God, whom you serve always, is able to deliver you.

I think Darius must have heard how God

once saved three men from being burnt in the furnace. A stone was brought and laid upon the top of the den; and the king put his seal on it, that none might take away the stone, and he put on it also the seal of the men that hated Daniel.

Why did the king put his own seal on it? That he might find out if any one came and took Daniel away, for no one else had a seal like the king's; so if any one broke the seal, the king would find it out. Why did he put the wicked men's seal? That they might see that the king did not take Daniel out in the night.

The king went to his palace that evening, but he was so unhappy that he could not eat, and he would not let his servants play music to him, as usual, and when he went to bed, he could not sleep.

He got up very early in the morning. Where did he go? To the den of lions. When he came to the den, he cried out in a very sad voice, O Daniel, is thy God, whom thou servest always, able to deliver thee from the lions?

The king longed to hear Daniel's voice—and he heard it.

Daniel said, O king, live for ever My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have **not** hurt me ; because I had done nothing wrong.

Then the king was very glad indeed, and ordered that Daniel should be taken up, and he was not the least hurt.

Why did God take such care of Daniel ? Because Daniel loved him, and feared him ; and God wanted to show the king that he was able to save Daniel, and that he was the true God.

The king was very angry with those men who had asked him to put Daniel in the den, and he commanded them to be thrown down into the den, with their wives and their children. It was very cruel in the king to have the wives and children put into the den, but the wicked men deserved to be put there. The lions ate them up in a moment, and broke all their bones, before they came to the bottom of the den. So you see that the lions were very hungry, though they did not eat Daniel.

Then king Darius wrote a letter, and sent it to all countries, and said, that he had made a law that every one should fear the God of

Daniel, because he was the true God, who could do wonders, and who had saved Daniel from the lions.

Do you not wish that every body had minded this law, and feared the God of Daniel? But they did not; they still went on worshipping idols. You see, my dear child, how much Daniel loved God: he would rather die than not pray to God. Shall you be cast into a den of lions, if you pray to God? No, my dear children, you may pray to God without fear. I hope you do pray very often. You should not pray, as Daniel did, before a window. I told you his reason for doing so. You should pray in some quiet place: God can see you in every place, and he will hear you, if you pray with your heart, whether you are kneeling by your bedside, or in a corner of the room, or in a little room by yourself. He will even hear your prayers when you are walking in the lane or in the garden.

If ever you should be sleeping in a room where there are wicked people, who would laugh at you for praying, and for reading the Bible, still you should do it. You should always think that God sees you. You should

be more afraid of making him angry than of any thing else.

Some children forget to pray in the morning; and are too sleepy to pray at night, and they pray in a great hurry, and without thinking or caring for God.

Does God hear such prayers ?

Daniel, by threats unterrified,
Before his windows opened wide
Kneels down, and prays to God ;
And as he prays, directs his face
Towards the loved and distant place,
Where once the temple stood.

His enemies behold him pray
At morn, and noon, and close of day;
And to the king they cry,
“ Daniel the Jew has disobeyed
The unchanging law that thou hast made,
And by that law must die.”

The king with grief is overcome,
And labors till the setting sun,
His favorite to save :
He tries in vain. These wicked men
Cast Daniel in the gloomy den,
Where hungry lions rave.

The king can neither sleep, nor eat,
Nor bear the sound of music sweet,
But mourns throughout the night.

At early dawn he seeks the den ;
When Daniel's voice he hears again,
How great is his delight !

Yet Daniel has no harm received,
Because in God he has believed,
And loved his holy laws.
An angel bright has been his guard,
Nor have the hungry lions dared
Unclose their cruel jaws.

Will Daniel ever cease to pray
To that great God who was his stay,
In his extreme distress ?
Naught shall divide his soul from him ;
And when his eyes in death grow dim,
His name he'll still confess.

CHILD.

And may I call this God my own ?
Yes, he invites me to his throne
To speak to him in prayer ;
But if I so delight in play,
That I can ne'er find time to pray,
His love I cannot share.

LESSON XL.

THE RETURN TO JERUSALEM.

EZRA 1; 3; 6: 14 to end.

I TOLD you how unhappy the poor Israelites were in Babylon. They wished very much to return to their own country, Canaan, but the kings of Babylon would not let them go back. However, God had made a promise, a long while before, that he would let them return some day.

Now there was another king in Babylon besides Darius, who was a king as well as he. This king's name was Cyrus: God put it in the head of Cyrus to let the poor Israelites return to their own country. For God remembered his promise. Cyrus had been taught to worship idols, yet he believed that Daniel's God was the true God; and he was ready to mind what the true God said.

So Cyrus told the Israelites that they might go back to their own country, and build the temple at Jerusalem. Cyrus gave back to them all the gold and silver things that Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple—

dishes, and basins, and cups of gold, and silver.

Many of the people in Babylon gave the Israelites presents before they went away; horses, camels, and asses to carry their things.

How happy the poor Israelites were to leave such a wicked place as Babylon! But O, when they came to Jerusalem, how sad to see the walls broken down, and many of the houses burnt! But still the Israelites were very thankful to God for letting them come there again.

You remember, that God never let the people who had lived in the other part of Canaan come back. It was kind in God to let the people of Judah come back.

When they had come to Jerusalem, they set up the altar, and offered a great many beasts on it, to show how grateful they were.

They wished to build the temple as soon as they could, and they got a great many carpenters, and masons, and sent for beautiful trees to help to build it with.

At last they laid the first stone of the temple upon the high hill in Jerusalem. A great many Israelites came together to see the first

stone laid. The priests stood near, dressed in white, with trumpets, and the singers played music, and sung psalms, saying, "The Lord is good, and his mercy endureth for ever."

And when the first stone was laid, the priests blew the trumpets, and the singers sung psalms, and the people shouted for joy.

There were some old people there, who remembered having seen the temple before it was burnt, a long while ago, when they were little children; and when the other people shouted, these old people wept very loud. Why did they weep? Why had the temple been burnt? Because the people had been wicked. Perhaps the old men were grieved because the people had been so ungrateful to God. The noise of the weeping and the shouting could be heard a great way off.

The people of Israel were a great many years building the temple. At last it was finished, and the people were very glad. This temple was not so beautiful as the temple Solomon had built, and God did not come down in a cloud, and fill it.

You will be glad to hear that the Israelites determined to worship idols no more. But

though they did not worship idols, they did not love God with all their hearts ; so they did a great many other wicked things. There were a few of them who really loved God.

The Israelites lived in Jerusalem and in the land of Canaan a great many years. They were now called Jews, instead of Israelites. God sent them prophets sometimes to teach them, and to put them in mind of a promise that he had made to Abraham. What promise do I mean ? That a Saviour should one day be born, who should be their King for ever. God had made the same promise to David, and had said, that this Saviour should be one of his descendants. Some of the Israelites, or Jews, thought very often of this promise, and longed for the Saviour to be born into the world. They knew that the Saviour would be born in Bethlehem, where David was born. How did they know that ? Because one of the prophets had said he should be born in Bethlehem. And they knew that his mother would be some person of the family of David, because the prophets had said so ; and they knew that he would be the King of the Jews, and of all people, for the prophets had said so.

At last one of David's descendants, a woman called Mary, had a son, who was the Son of God; and he was born in Bethlehem.

You have heard about Jesus Christ, my dear children, and how the Jews or Israelites crucified him. You will soon read about him in the Bible. Do you love this blessed Saviour? His Father sent him to suffer the punishment of Adam's sins, and of my sins, and of your sins, dear children, and of the Jews' sins, and the sins of all who believe in him. Before the world was made, God told his Son to come, and die; and the Son promised that he would come. At last he came, and died, and one day he will come again. When he comes again, he will bring with him all those who cared for God's promise, and longed for the Saviour to come. Abel will come with Jesus, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses, and Joshua, and David, and Elijah, and Elisha, and Hezekiah, and Daniel, and a great many more. All these men lived before Jesus came down to die; but you, my dear children, live after Jesus has come. God has kept his promise—Jesus has died for your sins. Do you love

the Lord Jesus Christ, and his Father? If you do, it is a sign that God has put his Spirit into your hearts. Then you too will live with Jesus in heaven, and you will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses, and David.

The priests, arrayed in garments white,
Are singing psalms of sweet delight
In fair Jerusalem :
But listen to the mournful cries,
And O, behold the streaming eyes
Of yonder aged men.

Those streaming eyes did once behold
The temple fair adorned with gold,
By glorious Solomon ;
But since the day the foe rushed in,
Those aged men have captive been,
In mighty Babylon.

Perhaps the sound of those sweet psalms
Reminds them of their parents' arms,
And of their infant years ;
Perhaps the thought how Israel's crimes
Provoked the Lord in former times,
Now fills their eyes with tears.

And though the Lord's forgiving grace
Restored them to their native place,
To bless them as at first,

Perhaps they fear lest Israel may
Provoke the Lord again to lay
Their temple in the dust.

CHILD.

O Father, while I live below,
'Tis well my tears should sometimes flow
For sins that I have done ;
For still my heart's disposed to pride,
And still inclined to turn aside
From thee, O Holy One.

The thought of all my follies past,
Now makes my heart to cling more fast
Around my gracious God.
In heaven no tear shall dim my smile,
For sin shall then no more defile
My garments washed in blood.

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